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Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy
In Education

By

Rita Kohli

2008

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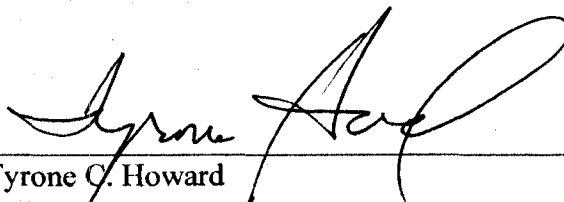
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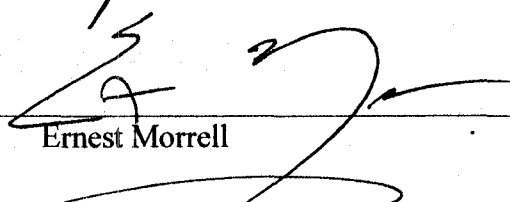
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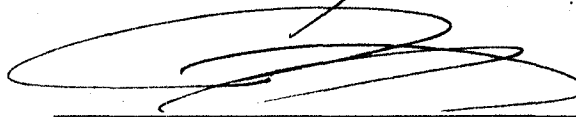
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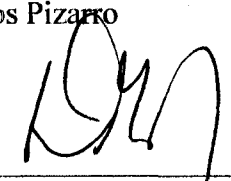
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This dissertation is dedicated to the students I taught at Lowell Middle School. I learned so much from all of you, and you continue to inspire my research and my passion for justice.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators

By

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Scholars assert the more students encounter educators from similar ethnic/racial and cultural backgrounds, the more culturally relevant and meaningful their education will be (King, 1993). While this argument is valid, it cannot be assumed that increasing the presence of Teachers of Color¹ is enough. In addition to recruitment and retention efforts, teacher education programs must shift Eurocentric paradigms of teacher training, and consider the strengths and needs of Teachers of Color.

¹ “Teachers of Color” references individuals of indigenous, African, Latina/o, Asian/Pacific Islander descent. This definition also applies for the terms “Women of Color,” “Students of Color,” “Communities of Color” and “People of Color,” used throughout this dissertation.

To increase the relevancy of teacher education for Teachers of Color, this dissertation examines the role of race and racism in the educational experiences, observations and perspectives of female Black, Asian American and Latina educators. Using frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Internalized Racism, individual and focus group interviews were designed to investigate 1) Women of Color educators' past experiences with racism in school; 2) the impact that racism had on their self-perceptions and worldviews; 3) their observations of racism in schools today; 4) the impact racism has on their students' self-perceptions and worldviews; and 5) the value or impact of the dialogue of the study on the women who participated.

Data analysis revealed that all participants, regardless of race, ethnicity or class, experienced racism in schools. Many women shared that they internalized the racism of their educational experiences and began to feel inferior to white cultural norms. The women in the study also shared observations that Youth of Color in schools today were enduring similar racialized experiences, and it was having an equally detrimental impact on their self-perceptions and worldviews. In recognizing the perpetuation of a racial hierarchy through schooling from one generation to the next, the Women of Color Educators were motivated to break the cycle of racism in their own classroom. They found the dialogue of the study to be an important space for reflection, healing, cross-cultural understanding, and strategizing how to proactively address racism in the classroom, and felt components of the study should be formally incorporated into their teacher education program.

Chapter 1

Why Examine Race and Racism in the Lives of Teachers of Color¹?

As a resource specialist in a middle school in Oakland, California, I worked with many students who were labeled “learning disabled.” Contrary to the label, these students were critical of the world and challenged it in brilliant ways that have forever changed my life perspective. My first year teaching I had an African American student named Eddie²; he was a talkative and confident sixth grader who struggled in math. One day, a few months into the school year, I was in the hallway during lunch talking with the English teacher, Ms. Wright. Eddie came up to us and asked, “Ms. Wright, I don’t got no lunch money, can I sit in your room and use the computer?” Ms. Wright was a seventh year White teacher who received a lot of respect for the high academic standards that she held students to at this under-performing school. Ms. Wright immediately responded, “I am not going to answer that question until you speak correctly. How can we say that in proper English?” We both looked at Eddie, waiting for him to rephrase his words, but instead he calmly replied, “Maybe not in your house, but in my house that *is* how we speak correctly.” Ms. Wright and I were both caught off guard and a little speechless, and Eddie just stood there un-phased, waiting for us to let him use the computer.

¹ “Teachers of Color” references individuals of indigenous, African, Latina/o, Asian/Pacific Islander descent. It is intentionally capitalized to reject the standard grammatical norm. Capitalization is used as a means to empower this group and represents a grammatical move toward social and racial justice. This rule will also apply to the terms “Women of Color,” “People of Color” and “Students of Color,” used throughout this dissertation.

² All names have either been used with permission, or are pseudonyms.

That incident stuck in my head for the next few days. Eddie, with his direct comment, had pointed out something that I had been taking for granted as a teacher. I knew that Oakland was the center of the 'Ebonics' debate. I was aware that there was a controversy over teaching in non-Standard English, when Standard American English (SAE) is what students need to access professional jobs and college. But what I was not conscious of, until Eddie so confidently pointed it out, was that although differences exist in the structure of African American Language (AAL) and SAE, at this school, we were actually teaching a hierarchy of those differences (Faires Conklin & Lourie, 1983).³ I began to reflect on how many classrooms I had walked into where daily oral language, an exercise for students to work on SAE grammar, involved a teacher asking a class of predominantly Black students to "correct" a sentence that was written in AAL. I began to think of all the times in which I had "corrected" students' speech and writing from AAL to SAE without thinking twice. Rather than teaching youth that languages and dialects have *differences*, and that SAE is something that we often have to know in order to access academic and economic mobility, I was teaching children that SAE was *correct* and AAL was *incorrect*.

³ It is important that we recognize why Standard American English has become the *standard*. Faires Conklin and Lourie (1983) argue that SAE is not the standard because it is correct or more useful than any other language or dialect. Instead, it is the standard because it is the language of the powerful, and those who wish to be part of upper and professional classes must speak like the powerful. They argue that because those with social and economic power speak SAE, SAE is seen as grammatically and aesthetically superior to all other languages and dialects.

Soon after Eddie's comment in the hallway I began to read about teaching cultural differences, and my pedagogy began to reflect my newfound awareness (Perry & Delpit, 1998; Yosso, 2005). This was a huge lesson that I learned from my 11-year-old student, but I was still not settled around this issue. I continued to struggle with the fact that, like Eddie, SAE was not the primary language in my own home growing up.

My family is from India, and Hindi is the first language of my parents. In my house, my parents speak what I like to call *Hinglish*-- a fluid blend of Hindi and English. So I was perplexed. Why was someone like me, someone who comes from a non-SAE home, so quick to uphold the standards of the English language? Why did I assume that SAE was the best way to express things? What happened in my life that led me to, consciously or not, hold dominant White culture superior while teaching Youth of Color? After much reflection, I realized my views were largely influenced by my childhood. Teachers in my past had reinforced racial and cultural hierarchies that had a long-term affect on my self and worldview, and I was carrying that socialization into the classroom.

I was born in Dayton, Ohio, in the late 1970s. At that time, our family was one of few immigrant families in this mid-western city. As my brother was beginning pre-school and I was just a baby, a teacher told my mother that she had two Persian children in her class the previous year that spoke Farsi. Her analysis was that because their primary language was not English these children had trouble making friends and were often confused at school. This White teacher emphasized that my mom should make sure to teach her kids (my brother and I) only English, so that *we* would not feel excluded or

confused. As a new mother and recent immigrant my mom listened to this Ohioan teacher, and she and my father began to censor Hindi around us. Because language acquisition happens most easily at young ages (Carroll, 1999), this Ohioan teacher's advice was a large reason why I was unable to speak Hindi for most of my life.

Reflecting back, there have been numerous moments in my schooling career where teachers made comments or acted in ways that have prioritized White cultural values over my own. Whether regarding my language, religion or traditions, throughout my K-12 education, I have been taught in both subtle and blatant ways that the cultural knowledge of my family is of less worth than that of the dominant White culture. What is even worse is that, as a teacher, I carried this learned perspective with me into the classroom and was instilling a hierarchy of White cultural superiority onto the minds of my young students. I know that I am not the only Teacher of Color that experienced racism when young, internalized that racism and carried it into the classroom. In order to break cycles of racism passed from teachers to Students of Color, this dissertation is dedicated to understanding the racialized experiences of pre-service⁴ Women of Color Educators⁵ within K-12 schooling, and the impact this had on their self and worldview. It

⁴ Pre-service is a term used to reference teachers who are still within their teacher training program, and are not yet teaching full-time. The participants transitioned from being pre-service teachers to teachers through the duration of the study. For that reason, I interchangeably use the terms pre-service teacher, teacher and educator throughout this dissertation.

⁵ Some of the women from the study gave themselves this label during one of the focus group sessions. I use this term throughout the dissertation to identify the Black, Asian American and Latina teachers who participated in this study.

will also explore connections between the childhood educational experiences of pre-service Teachers of Color, and their observations of racism in schools today.

Statement of the Problem

Since the closing of non-White schools during desegregation, non-White teachers were forced out of the profession (Bell, 2004). Unfortunately, even today Teachers of Color continue to be a small minority of the population of educators in the United States. The National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) collected statistics on the racial demographics of teachers and found that 90% of all public school teachers are White, and that more than 40% of schools do not even employ one Teacher of Color. These dismal statistics tell us that the majority of youth in the US grow up with few or no minority teachers within their entire academic career. Within education literature around improving equity, one of the most common responses is that we must increase the numbers of minority teachers. The more students see teachers who look like them and who understand their culture, the more culturally relevant and meaningful their education will be (King, 1993; Rong & Priessle 1997; Becket, 1998).

While this argument may be true, it is important that we do not assume that increasing the presence of Teachers of Color is enough. Resource distribution, state standards, textbooks and language expectations are few of the many ways in which education privileges or normalizes whiteness (Perez Huber, Johnson, Kohli, 2006). With these structures in place, it is fundamental to have teachers that not only mirror the

student cultural and racial demographic, but also teachers who are consciously aware of the way in which racism permeates within our educational system, and can actively counter it.

Preparing White teachers to enter Communities of Color cannot look the same as teaching Teachers of Color to teach Youth of Color, particularly if they share racial and class backgrounds. Based on personal struggles with racism, research argues that Teachers of Color may be more inclined to recognize both overt and subtle forms of racism than White teachers (Mitchell, 1998; Quirocho & Rios, 2000). While White teachers often have to learn about racism (Gay & Howard, 2000) many Teachers of Color have first-hand understanding of racism through their own personal encounters. Where we may need to educate White teachers about this subject so they can relate to the experiences of their students, Teachers of Color may need a different type of teacher education.

Even so, as demonstrated through my own example above, being a Person of Color does not guarantee you immunity from seeing the world, or parts of the world, with a perspective that privileges White culture. Typically, many Teachers of Color themselves have been educated by an oppressive schooling system that promotes White cultural values (Apple, 1990; Clarke & Flores, 2001). It is important that Teachers of Color are given space to reflect upon and heal from racism they have endured in their lifetime, so they do not perpetuate it in their classroom (Perez Huber, Johnson & Kohli, 2006).

Teacher education could be an important place of reflection for pre-service Teachers of Color. Unfortunately, Ladson-Billings (2001) reports that 88 percent of 35,000 full time faculty within university education departments are White, thus the majority of teachers in this country are not receiving any teacher education from Professors of Color. In addition, the majority of research and teaching strategies are written by and for White teachers. With a Eurocentric teacher education, it is likely that many new teachers will develop pedagogy that is constructed by or serves the dominant culture.

Goals of the Study

Grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Internalized Racism⁶, this qualitative study attempts to challenge dominant paradigms of teacher education. To provide a space for reflection and healing, this dissertation will explore the role of race and racism in the educational experiences, observations and perspectives of Black⁷, Asian American⁸ and Latina⁹ pre-service teachers. Because pre-service teachers are in an important training period, but are only several months away from leading a classroom, this is an ideal time to critically examine their perceptions in terms of race and

⁶ Both Critical Race Theory and Internalized Racism are defined within Chapter 2.

⁷ I use the term Black to reference a larger African Diaspora than African American, but I also use the terms Black and African American interchangeably within this dissertation.

⁸ The term Asian American/Pacific Islander is most inclusive to all Asian American subgroups within the US. Because there were no Pacific Islanders sampled within this study, when I reference the participants of the study, I instead use the term Asian American.

⁹ I use the term Latina to describe the women sampled for the study. However, based on the self-definitions the women expressed in their interviews, I also use the terms Chicana and Mexican American throughout this dissertation.

internalized racism. By investigating their past experiences and current ideologies around race, they can be better prepared to both identify and interrupt the impact of racism on self and worldviews of today's Youth of Color as they enter the classroom.

The research questions guiding this study are:

What is the role of race and racism in the educational experiences, observations and perspectives of Women of Color Educators?

1. What experiences with racism have Women of Color Educators faced in their own K-12 education?
2. How did their encounters with racism shape, influence or impact their self-perceptions and worldviews?
3. What experiences with racism have they observed in schools today?
4. How do they see encounters with racism shape, influence, or impact their students' self-perceptions and worldviews?
5. What impact did the dialogues and structure of the study have on the Women of Color Educators who participated?

This study is an attempt to answer the questions above. To provide us with insight to both the process and the results of this dissertation, the following chapters: highlight literature upon which this study was built (Chapter 2), explain the methods of the study (Chapter 3), explore the findings (Chapters 4-5), and discuss the implications of this research (Chapter 6).

Chapter 2

Theoretical Frameworks and Literature Review

For centuries, the superiority of whiteness has been imposed on People of Color all around the world. From colonization to the present day, violence, media and especially education have been used to instill in us a false notion of non-White inferiority. Whether we are conscious of it or not, it is something that has often infiltrated our self-concept and worldviews. While many of us are unaware to the degree by which racism affects us, individuals concerned with the plight of colonized and oppressed peoples have been theorizing the idea of White supremacy and internalized racism for many years.

This dissertation uses a CRT framework and interdisciplinary research to develop a stronger connection between racism within K-12 education and internalized racism, two concepts that are typically studied in isolation. It builds off of existing literature to also explore the teacher education of Teachers of Color. In this chapter, I will 1) operationalize the concepts of race, racism and CRT. I will also highlight existing research related to 2) internalized racism; 3) education and internalized racism; and the 4) teacher education and Teachers of Color. The research questions of this study, outlined in Chapter 1, are meant to explore a small component of a larger battle against racism. This literature review situates this study within a long history of racism, and the struggles of Communities of Color to challenge and overcome its psychological impact.

Race, Racism and Critical Race Theory

Race

Clear definitions for the terms race, racism, and CRT are central to the understanding of this study. Race is a social construct that changes over time. For example, individuals who were once considered to be non-White, such as Jews or Italians, are now viewed as White; and Arabs, who might identify themselves as White on the census, can simultaneously be racially categorized as non-White Middle Eastern when getting on a plane or applying for a job. Although it is often thought of as a simple social category, race is most often used to create hierarchies of power and dominance (Omi & Winant, 1994). In the United States, race has consistently been used to include and exclude certain groups from equal participation, resources, and human rights.

Racism

Racism, as defined by Solórzano, Allen, and Carroll (2002), exists when one group believes itself to be superior and has power to carry out the racist behavior. These authors also asserted that racism affects multiple racial/ethnic groups (Solórzano, Allen, and Carroll, 2002). Although the power of certain racial/ethnic groups has fluctuated over time, People of Color have never consistently or significantly possessed power in this country and thus, within this definition cannot be racist. Even though racism is tied to

race, it is not always acted out based on racial categories. It can also manifest against factors affiliated with race or ethnicity such as language, religion and culture.

Critical Race Theory

To centralize the experiences of People of Color in the discussion of teachers and education, this paper is framed through the lens of Critical Race Theory. CRT was developed in the 1970's primarily amongst legal scholars such as Kimberly Crenshaw, Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado and Charles Lawrence, but extends across many academic subjects. The framework was constructed to acknowledge race and examine its intersection with racism as a first step to combating the daily oppression of racial injustice.

Gloria Ladson-Billings, William Tate and Daniel Solórzano were some of the first academics to apply CRT to the field of education. Over the past few decades, many scholars have adapted this framework to examine racial inequity within higher education, racism in K-12 schools and resistance of Youth of Color (Pizarro, 1998; Solórzano Delgado-Bernal, 2001; Yosso; 2005). This project extends the use of CRT within education to include teacher education. It also utilizes a CRT framework to understand the connection between racial hierarchies in school and internalized racism through the voices of Women of Color Educators. There are five tenets to CRT within education, and all of them guide the design and analysis of this study.

1. *Centrality of Race and Racism:* The research questions focus on an examination of race, racism and its intersection with gender and class in the lives of Women of Color Educators.
2. *Challenging the Dominant Perspective:* This dissertation challenges the dominant perspective that racism is of the past, and that Black, Latinas/os and Asian Americans are monolithic groups with homogenous experiences and expertise.
3. *Commitment to Social Justice:* Transforming the education of racially marginalized youth will require the development of a racially diverse and conscious teaching force. Diversifying the teaching force can only effectively occur, however, if teacher education is equipped to address the needs of Teachers of Color. This project aims to push teacher education in that direction.
4. *Valuing Experiential Knowledge:* All data in this study is qualitative. Through individual and focus group interviews, the research project centers the experiential knowledge of the Women of Color involved in the study.
5. *Being Interdisciplinary:* Utilizing history and current research about internalized racism within education as a central framework, this project is interdisciplinary in nature. It draws from the fields of Psychology, Sociology, History, and Education (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

These elements provide an important framework to engage minority voices in identifying as well as challenging racism. I utilized all five tenants of CRT to deepen our

understanding of connections between racism within K-12 education and Internalized Racism.

Internalized Racism

In the previous section, we defined race, racism and CRT, as well as how those concepts are used within this study. To understand the connection between racism in K-12 education and Internalized Racism, we must also define Internalized Racism. For many years, activists and scholars have discussed the impact of racism one's self and worldview. Although this study uses Internalized Racism as a theoretical concept, the term is closely related to other theories of oppression, including the Colonized Mind and Internalized Oppression. To highlight the breadth and importance of this concept throughout our history and its impact on different Communities of Color, this section highlights multiple theories of Internalized racism through literature from the fields of Psychology, Sociology, History and Education.

The Colonized Mind

Frantz Fanon (1963) was a key revolutionary theorist of the 20th century. To support the Algerian Nationalist movement in the struggle for African independence from colonial power, he spoke with urgency about the psychology of those oppressed by European control. In his text *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon outlined the way in which a colonized mind functions as obstacle in the liberation of many African peoples. He

pointed out that the relationship between the native and the colonizer is not one of complete opposition, but rather the native actually is socialized to want the possessions and power of the colonizer. Believing in his/her own inferiority, in many ways, the colonized wants to be the colonizer. Fanon argued that natives have been subjected to a hierarchy of power for so long that their goal is no longer to disrupt it, but to claim it. The native no longer longs for his native culture, but rather has internalized the superiority of the culture of dominance and wishes to both embody it and rule from that perspective. Similar to the natives of Algeria, many People of Color in the US have been socialized to think, act and desire like the dominant White culture.

Internalized Oppression

Much like Fanon's theory of the colonized mind, *internalized oppression* is a sociological construct that has been used to describe the consequences of historical and current oppression on individuals and racial-ethnic groups. Native scholar Lisa Poupart (2003) theorized that there are connections between past violence inflicted on Native American nations and current violence within indigenous communities. Western society has enforced cultural codes of "otherness" upon Native Americans for over five hundred years in order to maintain social and economic dominance. The consequences of that, she argued, are that American Indian people have "learned and internalized the discursive practices of the West- the very codes that created, reflected, and reproduced our oppression" (Poupart, 2003, 87). Similar to Fanon's analysis of Black Algerians, she

emphasized that as long as Native communities continue to internalize Western perspectives, they will continue to evaluate themselves through a lens that views them as racially and culturally subhuman.

Critical Race Theory legal scholar Laura Padilla (1999, 2001) defined internalized oppression as “the turning upon ourselves, our families and our people -the distressed patterns of behavior that result from the racism and oppression of the majority society” (Padilla, 2001, 1). She argued that internalized racism has its roots in internalized oppression, but is directed more specifically at one’s racial or ethnic group. Her piece “But You’re Not a Dirty Mexican,” focused on understanding how individuals of oppressed communities, specifically Latinas/os, have accepted and often replicate the racist mantra of the dominant culture. Highlighting negative stereotypes by Latinas/os about their own racial or ethnic group, she argued that this internalized oppression thwarts social justice and their own empowerment.

Building on Fanon (1963), Poupart (2003) and Padilla’s (2001) theoretical concepts, it is important to explore the experiences of Student of Color in a White dominated society and school system. When Youth of Color enter schools, and are socialized through Western ideology that is often subjugating to Communities of Color, these authors force us to consider the impact of cultural oppression on students’ self-perceptions and worldviews. While most writing on internalized oppression is theoretical and does not exclusively focus on racism, it is an extremely useful construct in understanding internalized racism.

Internalized Racism

To date, internalized racism is most studied in psychology, but has occasionally permeated research in the health field and education. William Cross (1971, 1995) was one of the first scholars in psychology to define and study the concept of internalized racism beyond the notion of self-hate. In his model of Nigresence, he mapped out different stages of Black identity that African Americans go through in coming to consciousness about oppression. His research establishes that one can have a healthy self-esteem, yet still have negative perceptions of his/her racial group. Different scholars have conducted research with varying populations within the African American community around the pre-encounter stage of his model and had similar findings (Taylor & Grundy, 1996; Cokely, 2002).

Others have written about overcoming internalized racism within the Black community, including a fourteen page pamphlet outlining the impact and solutions to internalized racism (Lipsky, 1987; 2000), and a study on creating a within group sanctuary for African Americans to heal from the consequences of it (Watts-Jones, 2002). Even so, the models thus far are limited in their accounts of the complexity and fluidity in which racism penetrates the perspectives of various Communities of Color. Cross' research is important in setting the groundwork for understanding self and racial group perceptions of when racism is internalized amongst African Americans, but empirical

research must go further to better understand the sociological factors that connect to this psychological phenomenon in multiple racial and ethnic communities.

A few scholars have attempted to examine internalized racism outside the African American community. Quintana (1999) conducted a study on Mexican American children and internalized racism. He interviewed Mexican-American children about their ethnic pride- asking questions about why it is good or bad to be Mexican. The research compared data with responses from Black, Guatemalan and other international children from Latin America. However, the methodology seems to guide bias student responses, and thus, provides limited evidence of internalized racism.

Julian Weissglass (2004) theorized about internalized racism in an article about the achievement gap. Although he did not provide any empirical data, his conceptualization of internalized racism was very consistent with the definition guiding this study. He described internalized racism as a “process in which people of color believe and act on the negative messages they receive about themselves or their group. Internalized racism causes people to give up, become hopeless, or believe that they are not as intelligent or as worthwhile as Whites” (Weissglass, 2004, 3). Additionally, he acknowledged that the roots of internalized racism are in genocide, slavery, subjugation, conquest and exploitation; but because there is little opportunity for People of Color to act out their hurt or frustration on Whites, they tend to transfer racism on other People of Color.

Wiessglass used this definition to explain under-achievement of certain racial groups, and how teachers can work through it. His definition is powerful because it describes Internalized Racism as a psychological phenomenon, but ties it to a sociological history of oppression and a racial hierarchy. In this article, he also explained how internalized racism could impact any Person of Color (Wiessglass, 2004). Building on Weissglass' argument that internalized racism can result in the perpetuation of negative stereotypes onto one's own racial community or other non-White racial communities, it becomes fundamental that we begin to examine the ways in which racism and internalized racism manifests in the educational histories and current philosophies of teachers.

The research on Internalized Racism that I have highlighted above is incredibly useful; however is very limited. With so few scholars examining this issue, the literature does not fully honor the complexity of this phenomenon. Many studies do not explore the racism connected to internalized racism, or fully describe its impact on multiple racial minority groups. To address this gap in the literature, several colleagues and my self used the lens of CRT and built on the conceptualizations of Internalized Racism to redefine it (Perez Huber, Johnson & Kohli, 2006). Racism, from our perspective, goes beyond blatant slurs or violent actions, it also occurs when Eurocentric values, including cultural traditions, foods, perspectives and ways of speaking are imposed on People of Color as either superior or "normal." To us, internalized racism is when People of Color end up buying into that racism, and believe in the superiority or normalcy of Eurocentric

values. Internalized racism is exhibited on a daily basis. When People of Color refer to straight hair as “good hair,” or equate light skin with beauty, or view Western European suits as distinguished, while curly hair, dark skin and traditional forms of dress are seen as less attractive or desirable. All of these beliefs devalue non-European standards of beauty and dress, and in turn, maintain a racial hierarchy of White superiority.

To acknowledge the complexity and layers within internalized racism, we re-defined it as *the conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy in which Whites are consistently ranked above People of Color. Internalized racism goes beyond the internalization of stereotypes imposed by the White majority about People of Color. It is the internalization of the beliefs, values, and worldviews inherent in White supremacy*¹⁰ (Perez Huber, Johnson, Kohli 2006). This definition focuses on the impact of racism on its victims, but also acknowledges that the problem is rooted in whiteness and White supremacy and is something imposed on People of Color. Acknowledging years of activism and scholarship concerned with the psychological impact of racism, we must begin to think seriously about the role of internalized racism within Communities of Color. In this dissertation, I use this conceptualization as a backdrop in understanding the impact of racism and racial hierarchies in K-12 schools on the self-perception and worldview of Youth of Color.

¹⁰ We use White supremacy as a term to reference both the overt and subtle ways in which whiteness is deemed superior within our society. We include the KKK, lynching and other aspects of the White power movement, but we do not limit it to such. We feel that White supremacy is ubiquitous in society and, therefore we must use this term to name also its daily and less blatant manifestations.

Education and Internalized Racism

During an Era of Segregation

Within the field of education, many who research racism in schools describe the consequences as they relate to academic or economic immobility. However, as described above, racism can also have lasting psychological affect on People of Color. Education is a tool that can be used to liberate and promote growth, but it has also been used within this country to maintain a racial status quo (Friere. 1970). Carter G. Woodson (1933) wrote *The Mis-Education of the Negro* to explain how schools can foster a subconscious self-hate within the (mis)educated African American. Schools are the root, he claimed, of where Blacks (and Whites) are taught to believe that Blacks are of less value than Whites. He claimed that education has been used to maintain a racial and social order. Woodson argued, to maintain a racial hierarchy with Whites on top, Black students were taught to view their racial group as having less worth. They were educated to despise and mistrust their racial community; hence internalizing both racism and White supremacy.

In 1947, Kenneth and Mammie Clarke conducted a study on racial preferences of African American children to test the notion described above. Placing both black and White dolls in front of Black youth, and asking them to choose the one they liked the best, the researchers found that the children consistently chose White dolls. Clarke and Clarke's (1947) research proved that many Black children have a racial inferiority complex regarding whiteness. The scholars claimed that the self-hatred of African

American youth was learned from the conditions of schools during racial segregation. This study was used as a key piece of research in the case of *Brown v. Board of Topeka* (1954) as evidence for the need to desegregate.

Desegregation

In the United States, Woodson's and Clarke and Clarke's discussion may seem out of date because since 1933, race relations have improved and schools have legally been desegregated. Although *Brown v. Board* has proven significant for gaining access for People of Color to certain educational opportunities, including higher education (Hunter-Gault, 1992), what also resulted was the closure of non-White schools. Districts fired Teachers of Color because it was deemed socially unacceptable for them to teach White children. Mostly White teachers were left educating Youth of Color, often not because they wanted to, but because they had to (Bell, 1983; 2004). Transitioning to a predominantly White teaching force often had a negative impact on the psyche and/or educational attainment of non-White youth (hooks 2001; Bell, 2004).

As we look at the personal reflections and social commentary of certain key activists for People of Color in the US, they continue to speak about the detrimental effects racism in "desegregated" schools can have on youth and their self or racial-group concept. Almost twenty years after the Clarke doll study, Malcolm X (1964) remembered how his teachers treated him, socializing him to believe in his own inferiority as a Black young man. During junior high school, Malcolm X lived with a

White family and attended an all-White school. He succeeded academically and was at the top of the school. When asked by his teacher what career he saw in his future, Malcolm said he wanted to be a lawyer. The teacher responded by telling Malcolm that because he was a “n*gger” his goal was unrealistic and that he should instead consider being a carpenter (Haley and Malcolm X, 1964). Malcolm X’s teacher socialized in him the racist belief that he could not accomplish an intellectual goal. Because of the influence of this teacher, Malcolm X gave up his dream of becoming a lawyer and left the school. Later in life, as a revolutionary and activist for social change, Malcolm X preached about self-hate. He criticized US society for not teaching Black people their history, and spoke out about the way Blacks in America are taught to hate themselves (Worth, 1972).

James Baldwin (1963), in his *Talk to Teachers*, spoke to educators about their important role in the development of the self-concept of Black youth. Echoing Malcolm X’s sentiment, he talked of school as a place where African American children learn their oppressed position in society. Baldwin pointed out that, beyond the way students are treated, schools perpetuate myths about US history to maintain a racial hierarchy of White superiority and Black inferiority. He argued that to thwart the internalization of oppression of young Black students, teachers have a responsibility to challenge the myths and stereotypes created in society and in schools. Even though many years have passed, Baldwin’s comments unfortunately still ring true. Schools and society continue to

perpetuate skewed history and negative stereotypes about Children of Color (Loewen, 1996), and teachers today still carry the responsibility to challenge these myths.

In her book *Salvation*, bell hooks (2001) described the racist climate of her schooling as a child, post-desegregation. She explained that during segregation, there were limited resources for the education of African Americans, but Black schools were a place where both students and teachers were committed to the academic success of Black students. She argued that in an all-Black environment there was support and encouragement to excel; however, after schools were integrated, White teachers with 'biased perspectives' were now educating Black students. hooks also commented that White racists kept Black male students out of gifted classes for fear that they would have contact with White female students, and that this created a stigma that Black males were not smart (hooks, 2001). As we look at the extremely low representation of African American males in Advanced Placement and gifted classes today (Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002; 2004), we must acknowledge that the racism that guided the structures of schools post-desegregation continues to impact the success of African Americans today.

In 2003, Noguera interviewed Black high school students in the Bay Area about racial-identity formation and schooling. In his research, he encountered a situation where students, through a teacher's pedagogy around the text *Huckleberry Finn*, were silenced about race. In working with one student on an essay about the book, Noguera discovered that the student did not have any commentary about the character that was a slave. Through further discussion, the student revealed that although many Black students in the

class questioned the use of the word “n*gger” and depiction of African Americans within the text, the teacher made them choose between continuing this critical “race” based analysis and staying in the college-prep class.

To challenge or look critically at the subordinate role of African Americans within the text was deemed off topic by the teacher. In this classroom, if students wanted to succeed they were forced to accept epithets and negative perceptions about their racial group. By placing the critical examination of racism in opposition to academic success, this teacher developed a space in school where success was the acceptance of racism.

Without actually naming it as such, all of these activists theorized about the relationship between racism in schools and the internalization of that racism by African American youth. Being told by a teacher that you cannot have a professional job, or that being college bound means condoning the denigration of your race, can have a lasting affect on a child. Although we may see these situations as individual teachers or unique school settings, the teachers’ and school’s ability to create racist dichotomies about academic success and failure is a reflection of larger institutionalized forms of racism within our current educational system. The authors of these pieces all express the serious consequences that these circumstances had and can have on the way African Americans see both their potential and intelligence. The racism that African Americans endure in school is real; internalizing that racism is also real, and is something we must be able to acknowledge, understand and begin to interrupt.

Beyond the Black-White Paradigm

While it is fundamental for us to deconstruct the consequences of racism in education on African Americans, a racial group that has suffered such a long and horrifying history of racial oppression, it is important to also look beyond the Black-White paradigm when considering a racial hierarchy. White superiority has been imposed on all non-White populations in the US, in schools and out, and the conscious or unconscious acceptance of that hierarchy has large consequences on maintaining an oppressive social order. In this nation, education has been used to Christianize Native Americans (Zitkala-si, 1921), schools have forced the linguistic assimilation of Latinas/os (Valencia, 2004) and have excluded participation of both African Americans and Asian Americans from K-12 and higher educational institutions (Nakanishi, 1995). If we are to truly understand the depth of White supremacy in the education of our youth, it is fundamental that we begin to examine the ways in which all People of Color in the US suffer from internalized racism about themselves, their own racial group, and other non-White racial groups.

Elizabeth Martinez (2000) interviewed Latina/o student teachers about their personal experiences in elementary school and how some of those events affected their educational ideology. One of the young men, Roberto, expressed that when he was young he was a Spanish-speaker with limited knowledge of English, he dreaded first grade because his teacher used to scream at him in front of his peers. Roberto described one day in class where the students were playing a word game that, linguistically, he did

not have the tools to successfully participate. Not acknowledging language skills as the reason he could not play correctly, the teacher berated him in front of the class. Roberto said that by doing this she not only humiliated him, but also reinforced the idea that English had more value than his home language or culture.

The disciplinary measures used by Roberto's teacher are hopefully not the norm in elementary education. Even so, it is important to note that his inability to participate in this classroom activity was caused by a cultural mismatch. Yet, similar to the educator in Noguera's example who placed a questioning of racism in opposition to success, this teacher's actions validated a cultural and linguistic hierarchy- placing Spanish below English. Roberto goes on in the study to explain that experiences like these pushed him to internalize the value of Anglo ways and resent his culture (Martinez, 2000). Martinez reminds us that if teachers are uncritical of the Eurocentric standards that schools are centered around, Youth of Color may end up adopting Anglo cultural values, while feeling shame or disdain towards their own language and culture (Martinez, 2000).

While Martinez's study is very important, it is the only research project I found that addressed the psychological impact of racism within K-12 schools on non-Black students. As seen in non-education literature, internalized racism manifests in all Communities of Color; it must be explored in education, as well. To further Martinez's work, and fill the gap in the literature, this dissertation looks at internalized racism and schooling for teachers and students of multiple racial/ethnic groups. It pushes the discourse of educational inequity and internalized racism to place of inter-racial

exploration and understanding, highlighting and bridging the experiences of different communities.

Teacher Education and Teachers of Color

Within this era of desegregated schools, Oakes, Rogers & Silver (2004) demonstrate continued segregation. As of 2004, 41 percent of public schools are recorded as predominantly non-White, including students of African, Asian/Pacific Islander and Latina/o descent. This research also reports that majority non-White schools have poorer conditions, fewer resources, higher rates of un-qualified teachers and significantly lower achievement scores than schools that are predominantly White (Oakes, Rogers & Silver, 2004). Other studies also show that much of the curriculum and teaching styles in public schools are not culturally relevant to Students of Color (Delpit, 1995; Menchaca, 2001). The continual segregation of White and non-White children in schools, the conditions in which Students of Color are forced to go to school and the curriculum used to teach them, reveal an educational system dominated by White supremacy. As presented by these studies, we must begin to acknowledge the racist conditions in which many Youth of Color go to school and the evidence that Youth of Color are susceptible to internalizing that racism (Martinez, 2000; Noguera, 2003; Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999).

I strongly believe that for Black, Latina/o, Asian American/Pacific Islander and Native American youth to succeed in this racist nation, we must have strong Black,

Latina/o, Asian American/Pacific Islander and Native American teachers. Many studies affirm that Teachers of Color are an important resource for Students of Color (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Mitchell, 1998; Quirocho & Rios, 2000). However, as demonstrated throughout this dissertation many of us have been socialized through racist educational systems and can carry skewed perceptions of ourselves, our communities and other non-White racial or ethnic groups. When we talk about increasing the numbers of “minority” teachers, it becomes important that we push teachers to reflect on their own educational experiences, and how the belief in White superiority or a racial hierarchy may have penetrated their beliefs, values or worldviews.

Much of the literature on Teacher of Color focuses on the limited number of minority teachers, their recruitment and retention in schools (Becket, 1998; Hudson, 1998; Villegas & Clewell, 1998). King (1993) conducted a review of literature to discuss the importance of African American teachers and the issues that support the urgency around increasing their presence within the teaching force. King also looked at factors contributing to the limited presence of Black teachers, such as poor high school education, low recruitment efforts into the teaching profession, and an inability of districts to support Black teachers. Rong and Preissle (1997) examined the disparity between rising Asian American students and declining Asian American teachers. They argued that prejudice and xenophobia within districts have added to the shortage of different Asian American teachers, with the idea that uncovering this racism could shed light on better recruiting strategies. Becket (1998) argued that increasing the numbers of Latina/o

and Navajo teachers in hard to staff schools in urban areas and on Native American reservations could improve racial imbalances between faculty and students, create better communication and develop more culturally relevant curricula.

It is extremely important to understand the benefits and ways to increase the presence of Teachers of Color. However, does the existing research serve the existing Teachers of Colors in becoming better teachers? Urban Teacher education is so often geared towards how the predominantly White teaching force can be more affective around low-income Communities of Color. And now we are focusing on how to recruit more Teachers of Color. However, research is still very limited on ways to push Teachers of Color to be stronger teachers within their own racial/ethnic communities, or other racial minority communities. What happens once recruitment and retention efforts of Teachers of Color begin to work? How will we serve the much needed and increasing pre-service Teacher of Color pool to be better teachers if the literature and teaching strategies are not for them? This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by conceptualizing a teacher education that is culturally relevant to Teachers of Color.

Utilizing the literature on racism in K-12 education, Internalized Racism and Teachers of Color, this dissertation explores the role of race and racism in the lives of pre-service Teachers of Color. Using a CRT framework, this research highlights the voices of People of Color and speaks to People of Color, so that we can begin to build solidarity and heal from the many injustices all of our communities have faced. It is fundamental that we interrogate ourselves and the way racism has affected us, especially

as we consider educating and cultivating the self-esteems, self-concepts and worldviews of our youth.

Chapter 3

Methods

This dissertation investigates the role of racism and internalized racism in the lives of Women of Color Educators. In this chapter, I will describe 1) how CRT informs my methods, 2) the setting of this study, 3) the sampling methods and participants, 4) the data collection process, and 5) data analysis. The methods of this study are all structured to answer the following research questions:

What is the role of race and racism in the educational experiences, observations and perspectives of Women of Color Educators?

1. What experiences with racism have Women of Color Educators faced in their own K-12 education?
2. How did their encounters with racism shape, influence or impact their self-perceptions and worldviews?
3. What experiences with racism have they observed in schools today?
4. How do they see encounters with racism shape, influence, or impact their students' self-perceptions and worldviews?
5. What impact did the dialogues and structure of the study have on the Women of Color Educators who participated?

Critical Race Theory Methods

CRT is a framework that guides my research questions, as well as my methods. To create a space for the voices of marginalized people, CRT acknowledges the presence of racism and hegemony in our society. It also highlights the fact that knowledge and power are not fixed. By using a culturally relevant and accessible method of expressing the intersection race and racism, Critical Race Theory has infused emotion and compassion into academia, building community of those marginalized by race, class and gender (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). CRT, as a framework and methodology, allows room to challenge, and in turn, transform the way that research is done and the impact that the research may have.

Marcos Pizarro (1998) in his article “‘Chicana/o Power’: Epistemology and methodology for social justice and empowerment in Chicana/o communities,” outlined a methodology for CRT research. From the identification of participants, to the project definition and analysis, he worked *with* the participants in his study. He began his research project by asking who is experiencing “difficulties” or “problems” and whose knowledge is being ignored and drowned out by hegemonic ideology and epistemology. Pizarro’s concern was to engage in research that investigates and helps shift social injustice. Once the research questions were determined, he worked with participants to collectively define the design of the project, and to also analyze and re-analyze data together. Framed in CRT, his methodological approach challenges dominant research methods that view researcher and participants as fixed identities, rather than

understanding them as fluid collaborators (e.g. researcher as participant, participant as researcher).

A Critical Race Theory Methodology (CRTM) does not allow CRT scholars to see our research participants as data sources alone. Those who share their stories with us are people, with voices, complex lives and struggles. It would be unjust for researchers to take these stories for our own benefit. Instead, CRTM demands that research benefits the participants, and the communities they come from.

This study collected the narratives of Women of Color enrolled in a teacher education program, but it also was designed as a pedagogical process through which the participants were given space to collectively dialogue. The interviews gave a space for an interracial group of women to share and heal from past experiences with racism, build multi-cultural understanding and develop critical teacher networks. In addition to the pedagogical and community building benefits of the study, participants were also given \$100 worth of social and racial justice curriculum to support their work as critical educators.

Setting

The participants in this study were recruited from a Teacher Education Program (TEP) in a public university in Southern California. A little over a decade ago, this TEP program shifted its focus from serving high performing, wealthy schools in the Los Angeles area, to an explicit focus on social justice. TEP's current mission is to serve

underperforming schools populated with low-income Students of Color. In addition, this program has a commitment to recruit Students of Color. Thus, unlike many other teacher education programs, racial minority students comprise the majority in TEP (See Table 1). Since the shift in curriculum focus and demographics is relatively recent, the program is still sorting out how to best serve its new mission and student population. This study aims to provide insight to TEP about its largest population- Women of Color Educators.

Table 1

Race	RAW	%
Total	162	100
Native American	0	0%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	46	28%
Black/African American	9	6%
Latina/o	44	27%
White- non-Hispanic	39	24%
Other/Declined to State	24	15%

(2006-2007 Enrollment Data, UCLA Teacher Education Program)

Sample

I obtained permission from the director of TEP to recruit participants from her program. At the time of the study, I was also employed by TEP as a support provider to second year students. With access to the program, I attended classes and events to build relationships with potential participants. In the end, I recruited twelve pre-service teachers through purposive sampling to participate in this study, including four women from each of the following groups: African American/Black, Asian American and Latina.

I solicited voluntary participants fall quarter of their first year in TEP. I provided an overview of the study to all students through their Social Foundations course. I passed around a sign-up sheet for students to express interest in the study (Appendix: Sign-up sheet). To those who showed interest, I sent out a short form that students return via email (Appendix: Form of Interest). This form allowed me to gauge, to some degree, the interest level of possible participants. Almost 50 pre-service teachers volunteered to participate; yet I purposefully selected participants to ensure ethnic and racial diversity.

I received a grant to provide incentives to participants for the duration of the study. The women in the study each received \$100 worth of social and racial justice curriculum specific to their discipline, and were also provided with food throughout the interview sessions.

I recruited women, as they comprised the majority of teachers in the nation, as well as 77% of TEP's 2006-2007 class (Teacher Education Program, 2006-2007 Enrollment Data). It would have been very interesting to include men in the study, but there were not enough men in each racial category within TEP to actually sample males. The number of participants was chosen in order to create racial balance and to have enough students to create two focus groups. To fully capture an interracial understanding of Teachers of Color, I wish I could have included Native American/indigenous students in the study. Unfortunately, in this region of the country the numbers of Native teachers were quite low and there were no students in TEP who identified as Native in the 2006-2007 school year.

White students were not included because, in conversations about race that include People of Color and Whites, typically the focus becomes about whiteness (Wah, 1994). I also felt that issues of racism, as well as tensions that may exist *between* different non-White racial/ethnic groups could be better addressed in a racially insular environment. My goal was to create a safe space for Asian American, Black/African American and Latina students from different ethnicities and subject matter placements to discuss race and racism amongst each other.

Biographical Profiles

Below are short biographical profiles of each of the twelve participants in the study. The data for these profiles were obtained through surveys and individual interviews, and are based on what the women shared with me. For this reason, the type of information represented may not be consistent between participants. The women are listed in alphabetical order

Alexis is an African American woman that was 22 years old at the time of the study. She was raised in a racially diverse part of a small wealthy city in Southern California; however, both Alexis's parents grew up in working-class communities in South Los Angeles and were the only children in their large families to access higher education. Alexis's mother is a lawyer, and her father works in the business side of a phone company. Alexis attended a small, predominantly White private middle school, but graduated from a predominantly Black and Latina/o public high school. She obtained a Bachelor's degree from a private liberal arts college in Atlanta, Georgia, and planned to teach English in a mostly Black high school.

Ashley is a Black woman that was 22 years old at the start of the study. Originally from Oakland, she and her mother moved to a small White town in Northern California when her parents separated. Her mother was the only Black teacher/administrator at a predominantly White elementary school. Although Ashley graduated with a BA in Ethnic Studies from a public San Francisco-Bay Area University, when she realized the limited number of Black science teachers, she decided to pursue a secondary science credential and teach Health.

Carolina is a Mexican American who was 22 years old at the time of the study. Her parents were both born in Mexico, but moved to the US later in life. Carolina was born into a predominantly Latina/o urban neighborhood in Los Angeles, where she lived amongst extended family. Her family moved to suburbs of the Inland Empire of Southern California when she was in elementary school, where she attended mostly White, high performing schools. Carolina was a first generation college student and graduated from a large public university close to where she grew up. She returned back to Los Angeles for graduate school, and planned to teach elementary school in East Los Angeles.

Catherine was 24 years old at the time of the study. A second-generation Taiwanese American, she grew up in a small house in a middle class community in the San Fernando Valley. Catherine's mom was an accountant, and her dad a chef for a Chinese restaurant. Catherine graduated from a large public Southern California University; she planned on teaching secondary mathematics.

Deanna is a Black woman who was 22 years old at the time of the study. Both her parents were from a working-class South Los Angeles neighborhood, but primarily her mother raised her. She attended a mostly Asian American/Pacific Islander elementary school, but went to predominantly Black middle and high schools. Deanna graduated from a high performing magnet high school in South Los Angeles, and a large public university in Los Angeles. She planned to teach upper elementary in a predominantly Black school.

Elaine is a second-generation, Korean American woman. She was 26 years old at the time of the study. Her mother was a widow, and moved to Atlanta, Georgia before Erica was born. Erica attended a predominantly working-class African American elementary school, a predominantly Latina/o middle school, and a predominantly White high school. After

graduating from a small liberal arts college in Atlanta, Erica lived in Korea for 2 years, working as an English teacher. She planned to teach elementary school in Koreatown.

Imani's father is Ugandan from England, and her mother is Belizean. She identifies as a Black woman with pan-African heritage, and was 25 years old at the time of the study. Imani grew up in a diverse, middle-class beach city in Southern California. She graduated from a public Southern California University with a degree in African American studies. She planned on teaching high school Social Studies in South Los Angeles.

Janet is a Mexican woman that was 22 years old at the time of the study. She was born in Hawaii, and raised in Orange County, and then a working-class Latina/o and Filipino neighborhood in San Diego. Her father was born in Mexico, moved to the US when he was a child, and worked as a mechanic for the military. Her mother was born and raised in a small village border town in Baja Mexico. Janet attended a large public university in San Diego, and planned to teach an English as a Second Language class in an elementary school.

JoAnn is from the Inland Empire in Southern California, and was 24 years old at the time of the study. She grew up in a small house in a working class Latina/o neighborhood, and attended predominantly Latina/o, underperforming schools. Most of the people in her neighborhood were employed by factories, or worked as day laborers. After high school, JoAnn attended community college, and after 2 years, transferred to a prestigious public university in the Los Angeles area. JoAnn planned to teach English as a Second Language in an elementary school near downtown Los Angeles.

Juliana is Chicana and from South Los Angeles. She was 22 years old at the time of the study. She grew up in a predominantly Black government subsidized housing project. She was one of few Mexican Americans at her large urban public high school. Juliana attended a prestigious public university in the Los Angeles area, and planned to return to her former high school to teach Social Studies.

Kimmy is a fourth generation Japanese-American woman. She was 23 years old at the time of the study. Born in South Los Angeles, her family moved to Orange County during her elementary years. There she was raised in a predominantly White neighborhood and school system.

Kimmy graduated from a prestigious public university in the San Francisco-Bay Area with a degree in Ethnic Studies, but always had a passion for numbers. She planned to teach mathematics through a critical, Ethnic Studies perspective in a diverse Los Angeles high school.

Sonia is a second-generation, Sikh South Asian woman from the San Jose area. She was 26 years old at the time of the study. She was raised in a wealthy, predominantly White and Christian neighborhood. Sonia attended a rural, but large, Northern California public university and received a degree in International Studies. After college, Sonia worked as an after school program coordinator for an Asian American legal organization in Los Angeles. She planned to teach high school Social Studies.

The women were placed into two groups to ensure racial, ethnic and subject matter diversity. Each group was comprised of two African American, two Asian American and two Latina participants. In addition, I observed tension within TEP regarding varying levels of consciousness within the cohort. Pre-service teachers who had a limited understanding of race, or a limited vocabulary to talk about race or racism, were often uncomfortable in heated discussions about race and the classroom. For that reason, I divided the groups based on their comfort level with discussing race, as expressed in the Form of Interest. Group 1 were participants who expressed a high comfort level in discussing race and racism, and Group 2 were participants who were less comfortable talking about race, but still had an interest in the subject matter.

Group 1: Ashley, Imani, JoAnn, Juliana, Kimmy, Sonia

Group 2: Alexis, Carolina, Catherine¹¹, Deanna, Erica, Janet

¹¹ Catherine dropped out of the study following the individual interview.

Data Collection

Data collection took place over six months. Through meetings, surveys, individual interviews and focus group interviews, I collected information about the experiences, observations and perspectives of the twelve Women of Color Educators in the study. This data collection consisted of a welcome dinner, an individual interview, 3 focus group interviews (each addressing a separate theme) and a debrief dinner. All group events and interviews were separate for Group 1 and Group 2.

Welcome Dinner

To get to know each other in a relaxed and informal environment, each group was asked to meet for dinner at a local restaurant. This was also time where I explained the goal and format of the research project, as well as when I scheduled individual interviews. Each group also named themselves as a collective during the dinner: Group 1 decided on Pupusas (because our initial meeting was in a Pupusaria¹²), and Group 2 could not decide and stuck with Group 2

Individual Interviews

To centralize the lived experiences of these women, I conducted one in-depth interview with each participant. This meeting involved a short questionnaire, followed by several qualitative prompts (Appendix: Individual Interview Protocol). The prompts

¹² A Pupusaria is a Salvadorian restaurant that serves stuffed corn tortillas called pupusas.

were designed to stimulate discussion about 1) who are you, 2) your past experiences with race and/or racism within K-12, and its impact on your perspective 3) your current conscious perceptions of race and 4) your current unconscious perceptions of race.

Focus Group Interview 1

Within this focus group, participants were guided in a discussion about where they are from and their experiences with racism within K-12 (Appendix: Focus group 1 Protocol). This was a forum for students to get to know each other better, as well as to learn how race and racism played a role in each other's lives. The session concluded with time to free write as a means for participants to reflect on their own feelings and understanding of the focus group session.

Focus Group Interview 2

Within this focus group, participants were guided in a discussion about their current perceptions of race, on a conscious and unconscious level (Appendix: Focus Group 2 Protocol). This was a forum to push student thinking about race and racism as it pertains to their own racial group, but also other non-White racial groups. The session concluded with time to free write as a means for participants to reflect on their own feelings and understanding of the focus group session.

Focus Group Interview 3

Within this focus group, participants were guided in a discussion about the role of race, racism and racial tension in their lives as teachers. This was a forum for participants to get comfortable thinking about race and their students, and strategizing how to address racism and racial tension in their classrooms. The prompts to guide this focus group interview were dependent on the previous discussions, and the dynamic of the group, and were not pre-scripted. The group was asked to come up with something practical, either a lesson plan or a tactic they wanted to implement in the classroom. The session concluded with time to free write as a means for participants to reflect on their own feelings and understanding of the focus group session.

Debrief Dinner

Each group was asked to meet for a debrief dinner. This dinner was intended to be an informal space to continue discussion and debrief the research project. Students were given a short questionnaire (Appendix: Debrief Questionnaire) and also received incentives at this time.

Throughout the data collection process, the women were asked very surface questions, but also very personal questions. Many emotional stories were shared. Because this study was of a sensitive nature, privacy was respected at all times. Nothing in this study was shared with the public without full permission of the participant.

Data Analysis

Once all sessions were complete, I asked participants for voluntary continued participation in the data analysis process as a way to member check. I did not want to obligate them beyond the five required sessions or beyond June. Even so, several women were interested, and I welcomed their input and continued participation.

All individual and focus group interviews were transcribed throughout the study, and were emailed to the women after completion. Survey questions, emails and written reflections from the end of each focus group session were also considered as data, and were used to member check emerging themes.

After all the data was collected, I read and re-read the transcripts. I began to note reoccurring themes and themes related to my research questions such as “racial slurs during sports,” “invisibility in the curriculum,” “teacher racism.” I grouped quotes of similar themes into larger categories including, “racism in school,” and “impact of racism.” I then re-sorted the data into those categories, and outlined the data into a logical structure. This data and analysis were constructed into two findings chapters (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5), in which more details regarding the process of data analysis is articulated. Once the chapters were written, I emailed the drafts to the women in the study and asked that they provide me feedback. Several women gave me their insights and advice about the chapters that were used to refine the content and structure.

Chapter 4

Racism, Internalized Racism and Schooling

JoAnn is a Chicana from Pomona, California. Although born in the US, she has many memories from her K-12 education where she was deemed an outsider, someone who does not belong in the US. One day in third grade, she and her friend got into a fight, like many little girls do. However, to hurt JoAnn, this young White child called her a “border hopper, wetback.” At the time, this racist slur made her feel “dirty.” Even though she was born here and is an American citizen, the racism she endured made her feel that something was wrong with her. In sharing this memory, JoAnn started to cry. She expressed, however, that her emotion was less about her own experience, but more about the parallel experiences she observes with young Latina/o students in schools today. JoAnn is angry that Students of Color are forced to endure racism in the classroom, but is also concerned that they do not have the tools to understand or challenge it.

When young people go to school everyday, we hope that they will be safe and protected. When we think of the harm they might encounter, we often imagine violence, natural disasters, or even a simple fall on the playground. Rarely do we consider or discuss the psychological dangers that exist in schools. As demonstrated in JoAnn’s example above, racism can have a serious impact on the way Youth of Color perceive themselves and the world around them. Because of the racism JoAnn experienced when she was young, there are moments when she feels inadequate or not fully accepted in

American society. As she becomes a teacher, she carries fear and anger that young Students of Color today are experiencing racism as she did. Breaking this cycle is one of her primary motivations in becoming an educator.

Whether teachers are aware of it or not, they occupy a position of power. They have the ability to facilitate positive multicultural spaces where Students of Color can become confident socially conscious people. However, they also have the power to create classrooms that re-affirm the racial hierarchy of White superiority and non-White inferiority. While research has demonstrated that White teachers often must be taught about the pain of racism in order to not perpetuate it (Ladson-Billings, 1994), this may not apply to racial minority teachers. Teachers of Color are often already aware of the trauma that racism can cause through personal experience. Additionally, because most people have been socialized through racially biased educational systems, many Teachers of Color have also internalized racism as well. I argue, for Teachers of Color to not replicate racism in the classroom, it is important that they reflect and heal from the racism they have endured, as well as connect the racial injustices they experienced in their own K-12 education with the current day experiences of Youth of Color.

Using only select quotes from the individual and focus group interviews, this chapter highlights the personal memories of Women of Color Educators regarding their encounters with racism and internalized racism in school. Within the interviews, these women also connect their own experiences to the racism they observe Youth of Color experiencing in schools today. This chapter will begin to answer the central research

question of this study by answering four of the research sub-questions outlined in this study:

Central Research Question: What is the role of race and racism in the educational experiences, observations and perspectives of Women of Color Educators?

1. What experiences with racism have Women of Color Educators faced in their own K-12 education?
2. How did their encounters with racism shape, influence or impact their self-perceptions and worldviews?
3. What experiences with racism have they observed in schools today?
4. How do they see encounters with racism shape, influence, or impact their students' self-perceptions and worldviews?

To answer these questions I have structured the chapter into four sections. These sections will reveal the stories of Women of Color Educators in regards to 1) their personal experiences with racism in K-12 education; 2) the impact this racism had on their self and worldview; 3) their observations around racism in schools today; and 4) the current day impact they feel racism is having on the self and worldviews of Students of Color.

Personal Experiences with Racism in K-12 Education

Regardless of class, whether Black, Latina or Asian American, and whether attending a predominantly White or non-White school, every woman in the study revealed that they experienced racism in their K-12 education. The data that I share here is representative of their experiences, but hardly addresses the breadth of racism that they endured throughout their schooling. In this section, I will highlight just three of the many ways in which race and racism intersected for these Women of Color Educators within their K-12 schooling: 1) racial slurs from peers, 2) cultural invisibility in the curriculum, and 3) the attitudes and actions of school staff.

Racial Slurs from Peers

We expect that at some point in elementary, middle or high school, students might get teased or made fun of. What we do not expect, however, is that the teasing or taunting will be racially charged. From the playground to the classroom, almost every woman in the study revealed moments in which their peers used racial slurs to hurt or belittle them. These events often made them feel marginalized and self-conscious, but were also a way in which Black, Latina and Asian American youth were taught their place in the racial hierarchy.

In elementary school, Ashley was one of the only Black kids on a predominantly White middle-class campus. Although her mom was a teacher at that same school, she had countless negative experiences with racism. Many of those incidents happened on

the playground during recess. With a love and talent for tetherball, Ashley would play everyday. Whenever she would win, which was often, the White boys she beat would call her “n*gger”. It happened often and was never addressed by adults at the school; so she grew to expect and accept it. Ashley shared,

I was the bomb at tetherball. I would beat these boys, and they would always call me the n-word. Regardless. And it got to the point where I would beat them, and they would look at me and I would look at them, and I knew they were going to say it. I was so desensitized from the word. I knew it was bad, but I was just totally desensitized from it that it was just like, let me go run and tell the yard duty, and hopefully someone will say something. But never do I remember hearing them being punished or talked to, or even a discussion of what that word meant and what it meant to say it.

Ashley was better at tetherball than many White boys at her school. When she beat them, and they felt stripped of their athletic prowess, they resorted to a power that they could always rely on- White power. The power of the word “n*gger” comes from an intense history of White domination over people of African descent. Although the young boys at Ashley’s school did not participate in that history, they still have access to the word, and thus access to the power behind that word. By using it, they continued the legacy of White supremacy by yielding psychological dominance over a young Black girl. Without intervention from the yard duty, the teachers or the administration, in turn, Ashley began to both expect and accept these racist actions.

Several of the women in this study had similar experiences with competitive games and racism. When winning against White youth, young Women of Color were called racial slurs. JoAnn expressed that in high school, her all Latina soccer team

regularly played predominantly White teams. During those games, she was often confronted with racist attacks when using Spanish as a strategy on the field. JoAnn commented,

Our coach was Latino, so when we would play against other schools where the team members were predominantly White, our coach would speak to us in Spanish and we would speak Spanish to each other. They didn't like the fact that we spoke Spanish, so people would call us 'wetbacks.' That was our strategy, we speak Spanish; we use that. It's an asset, so of course they would get pissed and they would say, "Don't you know how to speak English, lardo, wetback, border-hopper."

Similar to the case with Ashley and tetherball, when the White students felt a disadvantage to the Latina soccer team because of their inability to understand Spanish, they resorted to racial slurs and derogatory statements to disable their competitors. The young women on the soccer team were using their bilingualism as an asset. However, White students were able to use the power of racial slurs to make their Latina peers feel inadequate and inferior.

Sports were not the only space in which racist language was used within K-12 education. Many of the women shared experiences where their classmates, White and non-White alike, would "tease" them using language like "n*gger", "Black girl," or "Chink." People of Color did not create these words and phrases, but because of the institutional power associated with them, racial slurs and epithets can have a deep impact regardless of who says them (Kohli & Solórzano, in press).

Erica is a Korean woman that went to a predominantly low-income Latina/o middle school in Atlanta, Georgia. She remembers enduring racial slurs from the Latina/o students. She recalled, “When Latino students were having trouble with... [Asian] students, they would band together and call themselves “Chink control.”” Actually, all three East Asian participants, regardless of their country of origin, had multiple experiences of non-Asian students calling them “chink”, telling them to go back to China, or pulling eyes and saying “Ching, chong, ching chong.” No matter how many generations Asian Americans have lived in this country, solely based on phenotype, they are often perceived as immigrants or foreigners (Kim, 2001). The traumatic experiences that these young women faced based on their physical appearance reiterated the message that Asian American youth are outsiders to this country.

In listening to the stories of the women in this study, the use of racial epithets on school grounds exists against Students of Color, and are shared experiences for youth of different races and ethnicities. Children are supposed to grow and develop in school, and it is painful to know that kids are allowed to act in racist ways towards other kids in those spaces. We must ask ourselves, why and how is this possible? It is true that they may learn racial stereotypes and racist language at home or in the media, but shouldn't schools intervene on racism? Perhaps racism amongst youth is not being addressed because the schools themselves are reinforcing the racial hierarchy and racism. In the remainder of this section, I will reveal the manner in which schools affirm racial hierarchies through a cultural invisibility in the curriculum, and the attitudes and actions of school staff.

Cultural Invisibility in the Curriculum

Research has revealed that state standards and most district-mandated textbooks are written with a Eurocentric bias (Loewen, 1995; Zinn, 2002). Many texts neglect to mention the complex histories and realities of People of Color in this country, or acknowledge them in very marginal and superficial ways (Perez Huber, Johnson and Kohli, 2006). Almost every woman in the study reiterated this finding, and felt that the curriculum of their K-12 education was not representative of their culture or history. Promoting White cultural values and perspectives in the absence of the culture and perspectives of Communities of Color is a subtle, but powerful, form of racism. When students learn about the world through this hierarchical lens, it can have a deep impact on the way they see themselves and the world around them.

When probed about racism in school, Kimmy, a fourth generation Japanese-American, reflected on the curriculum of her upper-middle-class predominantly White high school. She revealed how her Social Studies classes seemed to marginalize the history of racial minorities in this country, particularly the racial inequality they have experienced. Kimmy reflected,

It was in the curriculum too, the prizing of European history and the prizing of that kind of background. If you're Native American, then you don't exist. Or if you're Asian American, all you're good for is that you had Buddhism. Everyone who was not White was a thing of the past. If you felt racism, you were just imagining it because today racism doesn't exist anymore. So it was this whole 'color-blind' attitude that "Oh, we're being so understanding because we're not looking at color." But then what

about me- who feels like my identity is something so important to me?
Then does it just not exist?

By prioritizing European history, and ignoring or tokenizing the contributions and experiences of non-White people, Kimmy's Social Studies class affirmed a racial hierarchy. Subtle or not, she was sent the message that White culture and history are important and that the identity, culture, and the history of her people are unimportant. Additionally, she was told that any experiences she may have encountered with racism could not be real because "racism doesn't exist anymore." In actuality, the "color-blind" attitude that Kimmy described is a common manner by which White racial superiority is upheld. Some argue that without race there cannot be racism, however, ignoring racial difference does not change the ubiquitous presence of the dominant culture in our society (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

Sonia, a South Asian Sikh woman from the Bay Area, also attended an upper class, predominantly White school. She too felt that her history classes overlooked the presence of her ethnic community. She commented,

I think having a lack of curriculum about my community made me feel like it wasn't important.... If there had been any mention about my community it would have made me feel like, "Wow! Great! People are learning about me, and I am learning about my history." I think that is so important. I think there was one chapter on Islam and Hinduism. That's it. That was the history of India.

Longing to know about her own people, the absence of India in the curriculum conveyed a message to Sonia that her culture was insignificant. Like Kimmy, Sonia also went on to mention the neglect of race in her education. Sonia continued,

And I also remember that there was no mention of race in any of our classes. My friends never knew that I was distinct, or anything about me. It just wasn't emphasized. My teachers never asked me about my background. I was just Sonia, there was no other identity other than me being a student.

When race is not acknowledged in the curriculum, it does not erase racial differences. Sonia's rich Indian culture, her Sikh religion, and her Brown skin were all things that made her different than her White peers. These are things that should have been acknowledged and celebrated in the classroom. Instead, the class was run as though it was homogenous, and important aspects of Sonia's identity were ignored.

As articulated by both Kimmy and Sonia, the lack of mention of certain racial and ethnic minority groups in the curriculum can create the feeling of invisibility for many students. This was also true for Juliana. Juliana is Mexican-American and attended a predominantly Black low-income middle and high school. She remembers history being taught through a Black-White binary, where her culture and history was not even acknowledged. Because of this dichotomous representation of race, she grew up not knowing where she fit. Juliana remembered,

Within schools, history always used to be taught Black and White, and I used to think- then what am I? And I remember, I used to have a lot of Black friends and just wish that I was Black cause it would just put me in a category. I just hated being in between, just not knowing. Like I knew I was Mexican American, but no one else perceived me as that, so it's as though I wasn't that at all. And, I remember coming to college and not knowing who Cesar Chavez was. Just really not knowing at all. I had always heard his name, but it was never even mentioned [in school] AT ALL.

Juliana did not fit into the Black-White paradigm that was constructed within her history classes. In addition, both Juliana and the students around her were not exposed to the rich history and culture of Mexican-Americans. When the histories of students are not mentioned in the curriculum, it can have a direct impact on the way they view their place and worth in society, but also the ways that their peers view them. Juliana, Sonia and Kimmy all reiterate that their K-12 education neglected their racial, ethnic and cultural identities, as well as the important contributions of their community to US society. When we consider these experiences, it becomes clear that the invisibility of diverse cultures in the classroom can have an adverse affect on the realities of racial minority students.

The neglect of racial diversity is not only a problem in the classroom, but within standardized tests as well. Many researchers and activist groups have spoken out against the cultural bias and detriment of high stakes tests (Hout et. al. 1994, Californians for Justice, New York Collective of Radical Educators). Imani, with a Ugandan father and a Belizian mother, was frustrated by the absence of Africa within her K-12 education. Her frustration was heightened with the omission of Africa during the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT), and she was recently reminded of the racism in standardized tests when taking the History portion of the California Subject Exam for Teachers (CSET), and Africa was neglected once again.

It was more in the standardized tests that I noticed racism; I noticed that in the SAT. That really bothered me. There was no cultural relevance towards me at all. And none of the questions pertained to who I was. And to this day that is the case. I took the CSET two weeks ago; they didn't ask me one question on Africa. It was never mentioned. It's like it never

existed, and that's very insulting to me. I was insulted at the time of the SAT, and I'm still insulted now.

What was insulting to Imani is an important and often overlooked point. On the World History portions of the SAT- a test required for admission to many 4-year universities, and the CSET- a mandatory exam to become a History teacher in the state of California, there were many questions about Europe, but not one question about Africa. What message is being sent when European history is centralized, but the entire continent of Africa is ignored on national and state level tests? In addition, how will teachers be equipped to validate the realities of racial minority students, when they are not required to know or present multicultural history within their classrooms? As we attempt to identify racism in schools, we must acknowledge invisibility as a form of racial assault.

As the women in this study revealed through their personal experiences, when students of Asian, Latina/o or African descent do not see themselves in their textbooks, classroom discussions or tests, it sends a powerful message that their culture is not important or valid. In addition, this also affirms the message that White culture is "normal" and thus, superior. As we try to understand the racialized experiences of Students of Color and schooling, we must recognize the racial hierarchies that are constructed through a "color-blind" curriculum. It is also important that we recognize that even if prescribed curriculums carry racist messages, adults in schools do have the agency to intervene but often end up condoning, or even affirming these hierarchies with their attitudes and actions.

The Attitudes and Actions of School Staff

The comments and actions of peers, and the absence of non-White history in curriculum are an everyday experience for many Youth of Color. Teachers, however, have the power and responsibility to validate students' cultures and racial identities despite the inadequacies of their curriculum. Unfortunately many teachers are blind to the way White history, culture and values are prioritized, or the stereotypes they carry about Students of Color. Whether through low-expectations, stereotypes or apathy towards racism in the classroom, many of the women in the study described that teachers played a large role in the racism they endured within their education.

JoAnn entered a community college from high school, and was one of few students from her class that graduated college. She attributed the low academic attainment of many of her peers to the racist attitudes that teachers and staff had of the students at her predominantly low-income and Latina/o high school. She felt the adults carried many stereotypes about Latina/o students, which often translated to a culture of low-expectations. JoAnn recalled,

Some of the teachers when I was in high school, they had just low-expectations. They would let us do what we wanted. Security would let us out, and when I reflect on it, it's just low-expectations. They don't think we're going to do anything [with our lives], so they may as well let us ditch. And I can recall, teachers would say the stereotypes they thought that all the girls were going to get pregnant.... Like the school didn't think that the kids were going to amount to much. And if you did go to college, they're kind of like "Oh, you did! How did you do that?"

JoAnn revealed that adults on her high school campus viewed Latina/o students through a stereotypical lens, and thus expected them to succumb to teen pregnancy, low-aspirations and low-achievement. These racialized stereotypes resulted in a culture of low-expectations at the school, a phenomenon that unfortunately plagues many low-income high schools serving Students of Color. When we think about high school dropout rates, and the low numbers of Latinas/os entering four-year colleges, we cannot forget the racist beliefs that teachers and counselors often carry, as they are typically the gatekeepers to high school graduation and college access.

Many of the participants reiterated JoAnn's feeling that teachers and counselors did not believe that they were college-bound. Ashley also recalled teachers imposing racist stereotypes on her as the sole African American in honor's classes. She commented, "I think they were always surprised by my intellectual abilities, however they defined it. And I think they always tried to categorize me, or assume I wasn't going to do my work or be efficient." She gave examples of how these racist ideologies manifested. Her teachers treated her differently than the rest of her mostly White class. They never called on her in class, always asked her where her work was, and assumed she would not turn it in. All of these actions sent a message to Ashley that she was not as smart, diligent or successful as her White counterparts.

As exemplified above, stereotypes are a powerful form of racism. They do not always manifest in low-expectations, but can still be detrimental. Catherine, a Chinese girl at an all White elementary school, recalled that the teachers and administrators at her

school carried misconceptions about her ethnicity. The school officials, who were not exposed to the history or cultures of Asian American-subgroups, tended to lump all Asian Americans together. Catherine remembers a specific incident in third grade when the administrators wrongly believed that because she is Asian American, she should be able to communicate with another Asian American, regardless of their ethnic and linguistic heritage. Catherine said,

The school didn't even acknowledge my culture. They knew I was Chinese, but then the administration brought in this kid that was Korean- he was from a younger grade, and they asked, "Can you speak to this kid and tell him this in Korean?" And I'm like, "I'm Chinese." "But can you speak to him in Korean?" He was transferring into the school so they found the only Asian kid. They pulled me out of class, and I came out, and me and this kid were just staring at each other, like I can't [communicate with him].

How can we expect youth to be culturally aware, when the adults on campus are culturally insensitive to their own students? Catherine was the only Asian American student in her grade, and the administration at her school believed that she should be able to communicate with any other Asian American that arrived on-campus. By displaying minimal understanding of Catherine's cultural and linguistic identity, the school essentially dismissed it.

The past three examples have demonstrated moments when teachers actively engaged in racist behaviors. However, a more common way in which teachers affirm the racial hierarchy is in taking a "neutral" stance towards racism in the classroom. Similar to the "color-blind" attitude around curriculum, many teachers feel like they should not

facilitate discussions around race and racism, but rather they should ignore it or shut it down. How many times have we heard a teacher say, “we don’t say that in this classroom” in response to a racial epithet, without explaining what it means or why it shouldn’t be said? When teachers do not actively challenge racism, often unknowingly, they are condoning it.

Growing up Korean in Georgia, Elaine dealt with many racial stereotypes and slurs. What she remembers as the worst part, however, was that her teacher never intervened on it. Elaine commented, “Elementary school was probably most of the eye pulling, and just stereotypes. These things would happen in school. I have really bad memories of teachers being like, ‘I can’t do anything about it, sorry.’” It’s hard to know why Elaine’s teacher did not exert agency against the racism exhibited by her students, but Elaine said that it made her feel alone and powerless in the classroom.

Every child deserves to have an education where their cultural identity is acknowledged and respected. School staff must be culturally sensitive in order to cultivate and nurture positive self-images of their students. In the examples above, where teachers and administrators lacked cultural understanding, carried racialized stereotypes of the youth they taught, or just ignored their responsibility to intervene on racism, those adults were failing at their responsibilities as educators. As we consider the work of teacher education programs, it is essential that we identify the way in which teachers are actors in the racism that Students of Color endure.

When we examine the numerous experiences of racism in schools described above, we begin to see how serious an issue it is. These acts of racism do hurt and feel disempowering in the moment. Additionally, however, the impact is rarely isolated to that moment. It has been demonstrated that racism can have a lasting effect on the self-perception and worldviews of its victims, especially when those victims are youth (Cross, 1971, 1991; Perez Huber, Johnson, & Kohli, 2006). In the next section of this chapter, I will describe the impact racism had on the self and worldview of the Women of Color Educators.

Impact of Racism on Women of Color Educators

In 1947, Kenneth and Mammie Clark conducted a study on racial preferences of African American children. Placing both Black and White dolls in front of Black youth and asking them to choose the one they liked the best, the children consistently chose White dolls. When children are exposed to racism, the impact does not always end when the incident is over. Racism can seep into their psyche, and affect the way they see themselves and the world around them. Clark and Clark (1947) concluded that many Black children had internalized the racism of racially segregated conditions, and thus developed a racial inferiority complex to whiteness.

It is essential to consider how to intervene on racial assaults in school. However, as Clark and Clark emphasize, Youth of Color can internalize racism, so the solutions must also consider these effects. As defined in Chapter 2, internalized racism is the

conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy in which Whites are ranked above People of Color. Internalized racism goes beyond the internalization of stereotypes imposed by the White majority about People of Color. It is the internalization of the beliefs, values, and worldviews inherent in White supremacy (Perez Huber, Johnson, Kohli 2006). In this section, I will highlight the personal experiences of Women of Color Educators with internalized racism.

The women in the study all endured racism in their schooling. When encouraged to discuss the consequences of the racism, some explained that they were able to deflect its impact through support networks in their family, or through the intervention of good teachers. However, numerous participants did not have those means of defense. They revealed a deep connection between experiencing racism and feeling racially inferior. From intellectual inadequacy, to an embarrassment of their family, to wishing they were White, many women told heartbreaking accounts of internalized racism. It is important to acknowledge these experiences so we can understand the impact of racism. However, because these women were also teachers, it was particularly important to discuss the internalization of racism so it will not be replicated in their classrooms.

Janet was the only Latina in her military base elementary school. Born and raised in Southern California, English was her primary language. One afternoon, late into the school year, her Spanish-speaking mother came to pick Janet up, and called to her daughter in her native tongue. Hearing this, Janet's teacher rushed up to them and commented that she was not aware that Janet spoke Spanish. Although she had been

succeeding in class the whole year, because the teacher was now aware that Janet was bilingual, she began to doubt her English abilities and felt she should be tested for ESL. The teachers' doubts lead Janet to believe that she was not smart, and despite her success, she began to dislike school. She stated,

I remember thinking I wasn't smart enough- I never wanted to go to school, and I remember my mom always trying to get me to read more, studying. And I remember just saying, you know, "What's the point?" I just didn't have confidence in myself... As a kid, you're kind of like, well, why do I have to take this stupid test? I speak English, just like all the other kids. I didn't look like all the other kids, but I spoke perfectly fine. I was doing really well, but I just remember not wanting to be there.

Unfortunately, based on the way students look, their names, or their bilingualism, it is a frequent practice for schools to assume that many non-White students are English Learners. Many students, who are often fluent English speakers, are mistakenly filtered into ESL classes (Kohli, 2007). Even though Janet had been speaking English in class all year, it was assumed that because she lived in a Spanish-speaking home she must be deficient in English. The school's unfounded questioning of Janet's English language abilities caused her to internalize this racism, doubt her intellectual prowess and disengage with school. In this example, we can clearly see the lasting impact of racism on the self-perception of this young Latina student.

Many women in the study shared similar experiences to Janet, where racial hierarchies presented at school resulted in lasting internalized inadequacies about their family and/or themselves. For Ashley, the inferiority she began to feel was related to her skin tone and hair texture. With no other Black students in her elementary school, or

teachers that understood her hair, Ashley began to feel shame about her appearance, and wish that she could look White.

I wanted nothing more in elementary school than to be “normal”- I thought normal was to be like the White kids. I had so many issues around standards of beauty. I remember at times, all the girls doing hair at lunch, and me not being able to play, or getting lice checks, and I'd have my hair all braided, and they would undo it, but they couldn't put it back, so I just looked crazy all day. Like, “Ashley stuck her finger in a light socket,” kind of thing. So all of that together just make me so ashamed of my hair and the way I looked, and I just always wanted- can I just have long straight blond hair, and everything would just be better

Although the school staff was not maliciously attacking Ashley, their ignorance about Black hair texture caused them to overlook real differences between her and her White peers. These experiences caused Ashley to believe that being Black was something to be ashamed of, rather than something to feel pride about. This racial inferiority complex plagued her all the way into college, where she invested hundreds of dollars into straightening her hair, trying to emulate White standards of beauty. It is important to acknowledge that, as shown by Ashley's experience, a lack of cultural understanding in schools can have a long-term affect on Youth of Color.

Like Ashley, Sonia also had moments in her childhood where the lack of cultural validation in her education, such as the instance described earlier, led her to look down on her own race and culture. She used to believe that her problems were the result of her South Asian identity, and instead wanted to be White.

Looking back on my childhood, I used to actually wish I was White... I remember saying that out loud to my sister. ‘I wish we were White. Why was I born into this family?’ I used to blame my ethnicity for all the

problems in my life... And I think part of it was just not learning about my own community in our history classes. I think having a lack of curriculum about my community kind of made me feel like it wasn't important.

Sonia believed that being White was better than being Indian. She tied this racially hierarchical belief to the invisibility of her culture and history in her schooling experiences. Sonia experienced the racism of a Eurocentric curriculum that left her culture invisible. She also internalized this racism, which resulted in the rejection of her racial and cultural identity.

Internalized racism can impact the way young children view themselves, but also the way they view their families and communities. As described earlier in this chapter, Elaine had many negative experiences in school where she was teased for her language, and her phenotypically East Asian appearance. Unlike Janet who internalized an intellectual inferiority, the lack of intervention or cultural validation by her teachers caused Elaine to feel embarrassed in public of both her language and her mother.

Korean was my first language, but I lost that as soon as I got into school and I feel that it was because I was not around other Korean students and it wasn't something that my teachers ever said, "Oh, great, you're bilingual," you know, just never presenting it to the class that that was an asset and that was something good... My mom isn't a soft-spoken lady; she has a very loud voice and a lot of times when she was speaking in Korean, I would be embarrassed in public because I felt like it people would think, "Oh, Asian languages sound like all ching-chong-chong."

Elaine's teachers never placed value on her bilingualism and had peers at school ridicule her identity by yelling "ching-chong." Through these experiences she began to believe that her mother was contributing the problem when she spoke in Korean. The racism

Elaine endured in school caused her to internalize inferiority about the language of her family, and feel embarrassment around that valid form of expression, as well as of her own mother. This racism supported the racial hierarchy, and caused Elaine to believe in it. She stopped speaking in Korean, and only began to regain it when she moved to Korea after college to teach English.

All the examples above are from women who internalized the racism exhibited in predominantly White schools. However, based on media, curriculum, or encounters with White youth during sporting events, even women that attended schools that were 100% Students of Color expressed that they internalized a racial and cultural inferiority to whiteness. For some of the women in the study it manifested in the way they saw themselves, their intelligence, their beauty, and for others it affected the way they saw their family and community. The numerous examples of racial assaults in schools, and its deep impact on Youth of Color, truly highlights the need to address racialized messages embedded in education.

Additionally, as teachers, the women felt it was important for them to acknowledge and heal from their internalized racism so they do not replicate it in their classrooms. JoAnn contended, “We all talked about [ways] that we have internalized racism. When you go into your classroom with Black and Brown kids, and you have all this internalized racism that you haven't dealt with, you can't even have conversations like this. You need to deal with that.”

This study provided space for the women to consciously reflect on their educational experiences regarding racism and internalized racism so they could be better prepared to identify and intervene on it in their own classrooms. Participating in the individual and focus group interviews enabled them to support each other and heal from the impact of these experiences. Many of them never realized that enduring racial slurs, feeling invisible, and the mistreatment of teachers were common experiences of women of different racial and ethnic groups, and found it powerful to understand that internalized racism was a common experience for Women of Color. Through cross-racial dialogue and reflection, they were able to develop a more critical understanding of themselves and other Communities of Color. In addition, while reflecting, many of them began to make connections to the racism they observed in schools today.

Similar to their own experiences, these pre-service teachers continued to witness racial slurs between students and a racial bias in the curriculum; however, they argued that the racism they frequently saw teachers enact was the most damaging to youth. By connecting their own experiences to the experiences of their students, the women recognized that racism is an endless cycle enacted on Youth of Color in schools. To develop a pedagogy that intervenes on it, they felt it was not only imperative to think about racism in their own lives, but also to critically reflect on their observations of teachers and racism in schools, as well as the impact these experiences have on Students of Color. The next two sections will highlight key examples of their critical observations with racism and internalized racism in schools today.

Observations of Racism in Schools Today

The racism that teachers enact is rarely as overt as racial epithets or violence; it is better understood through the lens of deficit thinking. Deficit thinking is a framework that blames the deficiencies of Communities of Color for low academic achievement. Those who subscribe to this paradigm often believe that: (a) students enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child's education (Yosso, 2005). This is often connected to the belief that academic problems lay with the student, rather than with the system. When teachers view Students of Color through these stereotypes, this often results in poor treatment, low-expectations and low standards (Valencia, 1997). These stereotypes, and the poor education tied to them, are manifestations of racism. In this section, I highlight the Women of Color Educators' observations and analysis of racist deficit thinking in current urban public school settings.

Through her observations, JoAnn saw many blatant examples of deficit thinking in schools. She was visiting a predominantly Latina/o junior high school in East Los Angeles, and was witness to numerous instances of school staff disrespecting students. Some teachers on campus were using racially charged and demeaning language to address students. What exacerbated the situation, however, was that the administration dismissed student complaints around these damaging actions. JoAnn explains,

One little girl told me that their P.E. teacher would call them “hood rats”... [The teacher] is so disrespectful to them and sometimes the staff is very aggressive towards them... I think a lot of times if teachers are being really racist towards students or disrespectful, [when they tell the administration] they just kind of dismiss them. They don’t take them seriously. I found that a lot at the junior high, where some teachers were just disrespecting them left and right- they call them lazy, they call them all these things, and the administration and staff just dismisses it.

The Physical Education (P.E.) teacher was using a deficit framework when he referred to middle school girls as “hood rats,” derogatory slang directed towards Black and Brown women, implying they are loud, promiscuous, and without “class.” Other teachers at the school were also utilizing deficit thinking when they called the Latina/o students “lazy.” And in both cases there were no consequences. Through her observations, JoAnn also recognized that even when the students complained to the administration, it was never addressed. Administrators are responsible for the safety of their school site, and when they do not intervene on teachers disrespecting their students, they are condoning and normalizing this behavior. The fact that it is acceptable for adults to demean Youth of Color on school grounds affirms the belief Students of Color do not deserve to be treated with respect, and is a very harmful form of racism.

Another example of deficit thinking in the classroom was observed through Sonia’s interaction with a female White teacher in a South Los Angeles high school. She had very little structure or control in her classroom, and rather than reflecting on her own practices, Sonia commented that the teacher blamed the Black and Latina/o students for not wanting to learn. Sonia described,

I went and observed a teacher, this was a White teacher, and she had a classroom that was super-chaotic. People were just bouncing off the walls. They weren't participating; it was just craziness. And I remember, I talked to her afterwards, and she blamed the students. All I heard from her was just the typical deficit model of thinking. "These kids just don't want to learn. They're not motivated"... And I just kept thinking, "Oh my God! Here's this White teacher talking about the Latino and African American students. And just saying, "THEY don't want to learn," and not reflecting on what she was doing at all.

Sonia very clearly points to the deficit thinking of the teacher, and framed this experience in racial terms. This White teacher, before reflecting on the quality and structure of her own pedagogy and practice, jumped to the conclusion that her Black and Latina/o students were "not motivated," and "don't want to learn." It is unfortunately a common practice for teachers to blame Students of Color before introspecting on their own abilities or classroom interactions (Valencia, 1997; Yosso, 2005). But we must consider what kind of education can occur in a classroom when the teacher believes that her students "don't want to learn"?

Juliana had a similar critique of teachers using deficit frameworks to understand their students. As she described earlier, Juliana received a culturally biased education in her own K-12 schooling. Through the interviews, she also shared numerous examples of teachers viewing her and her peers through stereotypes and low-expectations. Reminding Juliana of her own education, teachers she observed would talk about Black and Latina/o youth in consistently negative ways. She felt that many teachers viewed students in South LA through a one-dimensional identity of gangs. Juliana commented,

I've heard so many things said by teachers, and it just reminds me of my schooling experiences. Teachers saying things like, "Oh these kids, they're just in a messed up situation. There's gangs in their neighborhoods, and they're brothers are gangsters. It's always gangs, gangs, gangs, like that defines the student. It's always such a negative perception. [Teachers] don't specifically say, "This student is Mexican-American, therefore he's not going to make it. But they say things that are kind of implied, "Oh the situation. Oh, they're poor." They just address the symptoms, but they don't really look at the situation, like where they symptoms are coming from.

Although gang activity and poverty are realities in particular neighborhoods in South Los Angeles, they are not the only aspects of those neighborhoods. There are many beautiful and culturally wealthy elements to every neighborhood (Yosso, 2005). Critical educators must challenge negative stereotypes of their students and acknowledge the complexity and diversity of their lives. However, this lens of cultural wealth was not the philosophy for many of the teachers Juliana observed. These teachers had limited structural analysis, and often allowed deficit beliefs to shape their understanding of their students. Operating through this lens often led to comments that devalued students' capabilities and held them to minimal standards.

Janet is a Latina pre-service elementary teacher who unfortunately shared another example of a teacher with deficit thinking. Similar to her own encounter in elementary school with a teacher with language bias, while observing an English Language Development (ELD) 5th grade class of Spanish speakers, she noticed the teacher interacting with the students in degrading ways regarding their language skills. For example, when preparing for the exam to test out of English as a Second Language (ESL)

classes, Janet felt that the teacher belittled students. She would tell the students if they do not pass it means they cannot speak English. Janet also mentioned that the teacher would chastise the children for not understanding her, harshly equating a lack of understanding to an inability to speak English.

Some of the comments the teacher makes are really harsh. If she says something and she has to repeat herself, or the kids are not catching on, she's like "Don't you speak English? Don't you speak English?" And they speak English! It's just English as a second language so there are mistakes they're going to make.

California schools view "non-English" speakers through a deficit lens. In 1998, Proposition 227 was approved, requiring that all children in California public schools be taught only in English (Gándara, 2002). Over time the labels for students who come to school with minimal English skills have transitioned from ESL to 'English Language Learner,' (ELL) and then 'English Learner' (EL). Although these terms have evolved, what has remained consistent is that they center students' identities through their abilities to speak the English language. The students who bear these labels are not just English Learners; they are also Spanish speakers, Korean speakers, Tagalog speakers and speakers of many other languages, with very rich cultural and linguistic knowledge.

Because the majority of students enrolled in English Language Development Classes (ELD) are Students of Color, when schools subscribe to these English Only campaign driven models of learning, they in turn, deem English superior to the language and cultural traditions of non-White people. By framing the students' identity and worth through their ability to speak English, the teacher Janet observed not only created a

hostile learning environment, but also created a racial and linguistic hierarchy of English language superiority.

Hierarchies are not only constructed between White and non-White, or English-speakers and English-learners. Teachers and administrators also construct divisions and hierarchies between Students of Color. Kimmy was a student teacher in a school with predominantly Black and Latina/o students. The district reported that African Americans were performing lower than the Latina/o students on their standardized English tests. To respond to this achievement gap, the administration at her school decided to have a special assembly for just the African American students. Kimmy explained that the notices for the assembly were handed out to African American students during class. This resulted in Latina/o students making comments like, “Oh we didn’t get them because we’re not as dumb as you are,” or, “we’re the smart ones.”

Brazilian activist and educator Paulo Friere argues that divide and rule is one of the four ways that oppressors maintain hierarchies of oppression (1970). He argues, “it is in the interest of the oppressor to weaken the oppressed still further, to isolate them, to create and to deepen rifts among them” (Freire, 1970, 141). Los Angeles is a city that already faces Black-Latina/o tension. At Kimmy’s school, although they may not have realized it, when the administrators separated achievement across racial lines they created a hierarchical division between the Black and Brown students. When they singled out Black students by passing out notices in class, it not only reinforced this hierarchy, but also “create[d] and deepen[ed] rifts among” Black and Latina/o students. This “divide

and rule” tool serves to benefit and keep Whites at the top of the hierarchy by structuring a system where People of Color see themselves in competition to one another, thus fostering inter- and intra-group conflict (Kohli & Solórzano, in press).

The subordination of Communities of Color is affirmed by the structure of our school system, as well by the beliefs and actions of many of the adults who work in those spaces. The idea of racial inferiority is so common; it even exists within TEP, a teacher education program built around social and racial justice. Ashley went to a subject matter meeting for TEP, where she was grouped with all the first and second year secondary Science cohort students. She said they were talking about finding science jobs in middle school. One White woman in the group argued that certain schools had more job openings because they are predominantly Black, and that Black students are challenging. In talking about a predominantly Black middle School in South Los Angeles, Ashley explained,

She made the argument “Yeah, you know, [that school] has a lot of jobs. I mean, that’s obvious because it’s in South Central and it’s a lot of black kids and they can be difficult to work with,” and I was just shocked... not even shocked that she said it, but that she said [it] and I was standing right there. I’m like, “If you’re going to be so just open about your ignorance, wouldn’t you at least not say it when a black person’s standing there?”

The White woman in Ashley’s example subscribed to the belief that predominantly Black schools have job vacancies because Black kids are “difficult to work with.” With no acknowledgement of the structural reasons why it can be challenging to teach in South Los Angeles schools, including inadequate resources, overcrowded classrooms and

testing pressures from NCLB, this teacher attributed the large number of employment opportunities to a racially based stereotype about Black children. Because of the hostile racial climate of her teacher education science cohort, Ashley was not even shocked by this overtly racist statement. Instead her shock was tied to the comfort the White woman felt in expressing her racism in front of a Black peer. Ashley went on to explain that the others in the group, just stood there nodding in agreement. According to Ashley, many TEP students in this group carry racist assumptions about African Americans. What is most problematic is that these individuals are currently teachers of Students of Color

This was not an isolated incident in TEP, many women expressed moments where TEP students and instructors participated in or condoned racist behavior. JoAnn was told by another pre-service teacher, "I'd rather work in East L.A. because Latinos are easier to work with than black kids," She was really angered and frustrated by that comment because she felt it perpetuated a myth of Latinas/os as submissive and silent, and also created divisions between Latinas/os and Blacks, two groups that often endure similar social circumstances. She argued, "How can you tell me that? Like [I'm] easier, just kind of dividing us- Latinos and Blacks. I think people do have this perception of Latinos being very humble and just immigrants and they're going to listen to you, but I think they don't really understand Latinos."

What was most frustrating to JoAnn, is that although these comments are made in casual conversation, they are also stated during class time. "They say it in class too. That's the funny thing, sometimes I'm just like, 'I cannot believe you said this in class

and we're in a social justice teacher education program.' It's just really frustrating." Being a part of a teacher education program committed to Social Justice, you would believe that professors would push back on statements that affirm racial stereotypes and divisions. However, this push back is not happening within TEP. When racist beliefs are not challenged within teacher education, how do we expect to produce culturally sensitive teachers?

Students of Color in segregated spaces are forced to endure conditions that would never be acceptable in predominantly White schools. Beyond dilapidated buildings and dirty, vermin infested classrooms, we often overlook the disrespect of teachers and administrators towards a mostly Black and Latina/o student population. As the interviews reveal, when adults belittle and chastise students in these spaces, it is rarely challenged or discussed. When schools overlook these behaviors, they are sending the message that it is acceptable to treat Students of Color in this way. This acceptance is a form of deficit thinking.

The Women of Color Educators saw racism as a cycle that continues in schools; it existed when they were young, and teachers reproduce it today. To break the cycle of racism in their own classrooms, the pre-service teachers of this study both acknowledged and deconstructed these problematic behaviors and belief systems. The women also felt that to create safe environments for youth, teacher racism must be addressed within teacher education and within the schools they teach. They also shared observations of the

lasting impact of racism on Youth of Color in schools today, and discussed ways to intervene.

Impact of Racism in Schools Today

As the Clark study demonstrated in 1947, many Blacks internalized American racism, which caused them to believe in their own inferiority to whiteness. This study was evidence used to support desegregation in the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. However, while forced integration dealt with the symptoms of racism-segregation, it never really dealt with the underlying disease- White supremacy (Carter, 2004). In 2006, sixteen year old Kiri Davis replicated the Clark doll study in a documentary entitled "A Girl Like Me." Although almost sixty years later, Davis unfortunately found the same results- Black children consistently preferred White dolls to Black dolls, demonstrating a belief in White superiority and Black inferiority. It may seem obvious, but when we do not address the roots of racism, we cannot expect it to disappear.

Similar to the fact that racism is a part of our schools past and present, the impact of racism continues to harm Students of Color in our current educational system. Much like their own experiences, the women in the study encountered students who had internalized racism. Many students believed that they were intellectually inadequate, while others were self-deprecating and looked down on themselves, their culture and their community. It was important that the pre-service teachers of this study connected

their own experiences with internalized racism and internalized racism of their students, so they could begin to intervene. In addition to their descriptions, they all shared strategies that they used to break the cycle of racism and internalized racism in schools today.

Elaine shared an example of a teacher who was culturally insensitive to the names of her recent immigrant students, and consistently would mispronounce them. The first and second graders, not recognizing their skewed names, would not respond, leaving the teacher angry and yelling at them. Elaine stated,

The teacher called someone who's name is Fidel, "Fiddle, Fiddle," and the student is not responding because that's not his name. You're not going to respond to your name if you don't recognize it, and then she berates him, yells at him like, "Why are you answering me? Why aren't you answering me?" and of course imagine how confused [he was]. It was clear that [he was thinking]...."This teacher is yelling at me because I'm doing something wrong. I don't know what I'm doing, but I'm being bad," and he doesn't know what he's doing.

Elaine, who herself had endured the cultural misperceptions of teachers, was very aware of how the teacher's actions in this classroom were contributing to the student's negative sense of self. She argued that the teacher was not sensitive to the students' names, their recent arrival in the US, and their limited English skills. When students innocently and genuinely did not know what to do in class, she would "berate" and "yell" at them.

Because they did not understand what the teacher wanted, or that the teacher was acting in a culturally and racially biased way, these young children began to internalize that they were doing something wrong. Based on her own experiences and these observations,

Elaine expressed a dedication to creating a classroom that was culturally sensitive and affirmed the identities of all children and their linguistic abilities.

It is not only the overt racism of teachers that can lead to internalized racism. Carolina is a Mexican-American woman who was student teaching in a 100% Latina/o elementary school. During her observations she noticed that a lot of the students developed negative perspectives about their racial/ethnic group through the media. However, she felt that the teacher was not intervening on these perceptions, and this resulted in students looking down on themselves. She commented,

A lot of times I hear [the students] pretty much bash on their own race, and I think a lot of that has to do with them hearing all these negative stereotypes about their own race. In the media that's all that's being portrayed. All negative, negativity about our race- and it's not being talked about in their classroom. They're not being taught about their own race in the classroom, and so they start beating themselves up for it.

Carolina expressed that the Mexican students in this elementary school were exposed to negative images about their ethnic community through the media. With no intervention in school, and a cultural and racial invisibility in the curriculum, she felt that the students began to develop a cultural inferiority complex. When space is not created in school to acknowledge and deconstruct the negative racial messages in our society and media, students are often unable to counter these beliefs and begin to internalize them. As Carolina started student teaching, she began to incorporate critical media literacy and Mexican history into the curriculum to address this issue.

Ashley felt similarly that Black students at her school did not have ethnic pride, and that much of this attitude came from the media. She agreed with Carolina that teachers were not doing anything to mediate or intervene on their perceptions of White superiority and Black inferiority, which resulted in the continuation of Black self-hate.

Ashley comments,

What plays out with them the most is White supremacy and teasing each other about being too dark, having nappy hair, having parents that look a certain way, or dressing a certain way, or not having things that are associated with wealth that are associated with mostly White wealth. But it's just these undertones of White supremacy that are never really discussed, and I think teachers hear it, and no one EVER stops to talk about it.

Ashley described many examples of Black students accepting the racial hierarchy that deems dark skin and “nappy” hair as less desirable than light skin and straight hair.

Having internalized racism about White standards of beauty when she was young, and overcoming that painful self-deprecation, Ashley was very aware of the ways in which her Black students were subscribing to White supremacist ideals. It is important to note that while Ashley had internalized White supremacy in a predominantly White school setting, her students were internalizing the same racist beliefs in a predominantly Black school setting. As research has demonstrated, there are many invisible factors in society and in schools that promote White superiority and non-White inferiority, regardless of the demographic context (Clarke & Clarke, 1947; Davis, 2006; Perez Huber, Johnson & Kohli, 2006; Woodson, 1933). Ashley was very committed to promoting self-love and ethnic pride as a means to disrupt the continuing cycle of internalized racism.

Cultural or racial invisibility in the curriculum as a cause of internalized racism was a re-occurring theme in the interviews. Deanna, an African American woman, also shared an example of her Black middle school students developing a negative perception of their community and neighborhoods because of an invisibility of social issues in the classroom. Rather than having the structural understanding of why many low-income neighborhoods have high rates of homelessness or unemployment, her students would see community members out of work or homeless and blame them. She describes,

So we were trying to get them to think critically about their neighborhood and we were saying, "When you drive by and you see a lot of black people on the streets, homeless or hanging out at the liquor store or not working during the daytime, what do you think? Why do you think they're there? How do you think they got there?" and a lot of them said, "Oh, they're lazy. They're just lazy. They don't want to work." They're not being taught to think about these things. They just think things just got that way because that race is predestined to be that...or that it's that race's fault.

Deanna's discussion with these students revealed a very problematic, but common, sentiment. The curriculum we use in schools teaches children about individualism and to believe in meritocracy (Loewen, 1995; Sleeter et. al, 1991). We are told, that if people are successful they worked hard and deserve it, and if they are not it's because they did not work hard enough. When youth are indoctrinated with these ideals, but live in communities where there are high rates of poverty, students can be socialized to believe that their race caused their own struggles. This idea can leave low-income Youth of Color internalizing a racist view that blames their families and communities for their poverty. As Deanna points out, this attitude is in part related to the fact the youth in her

classroom were “not being taught to think about these things.” Recognizing this as a problem, she was committed to intervening on this internalized racism by infusing critical discussions about social issues in her classes.

These powerful examples of internalized racism are just a few of the numerous ways in which racism exhibited in school impacts their self and worldviews. Whether it was an overt cultural disrespect, or a more passive neglect of the various languages, cultures and histories of Students of Color, these circumstances allowed for the development of self-hate in many youth in Los Angeles schools. Through the voices of the women in this study, it is clear that teachers can play a significant role in the construction of negative self-perceptions of Students of Color. The women also demonstrate, however, that teachers can participate in dismantling racism by providing space for students to critically analyze and heal from the assaults they endure in their daily lives.

Conclusion

As we think of how to create a better education for Youth of Color, we must begin by understanding their experiences in schools. This chapter provided an overview of how deeply racism was and is a part of those experiences, regardless of race, class or school demographics. Whether in low-income, middle, or upper class schools, or whether attending a school that is predominantly White or predominantly non-White, the Students of Color described in this chapter were all susceptible to racism and internalizing that

racism. Through the racial slurs of peers, invisibility in the curriculum, and the actions of school staff, the stories of the Asian American, Black, and Latina women in the study shed light on the manner in which education often negates the culture or positive self-image of Students of Color. Through excerpts from the interviews, this chapter also highlighted the detrimental impact of racism on the way that students view themselves, their families and their communities, where many students began to devalue their intellect, language, race and culture.

This research project, framed through CRT, was designed to add to our understanding of racism in schools, but was also meant to be a pedagogical space for the participants. In addition to the contributions to the field, this study provided the Women of Color Educators the space to reflect and heal from the racism they endured when they were young. Through sharing these experiences in focus group interviews, they were also able to build cross-cultural understanding of how similarly racism manifests in the educational experiences of Women of Color of differing race and ethnicities. Additionally, as teachers, it also prompted them to make connections to their own classrooms and recognize that racism and internalized racism are part of a continuous cycle that must be broken, and that they have the ability to do so.

It takes great strength to have pride in our culture when degraded, and to stand up against cultural biases and racism. We must encourage our students to resist believing the message that People of Color are inferior. To do so, however, we must also heal from the wounds of our own education. Fighting racism is a difficult and uphill battle, but the

more that we believe in the immense value of diverse cultural knowledge, language and rich traditions, the more equipped we will be create spaces that educate and empower our children.

Chapter 5

The Importance of Dialogue in Teacher Development

Imani experienced racism in her K-12 education through an invisibility of her culture in the curriculum, and low expectations of her abilities based on her phenotype. She articulated that racism continued to be part of her adult life, and also a part of the lives of her students. To become an effective teacher, she believed it important to discuss and address the reality of racial discrimination in schools. However, she also felt that it was hard to openly talk about race within TEP because many of her peers and instructors shied away from addressing it. For that reason, she appreciated the interviews as a unique space in her teacher education to deconstruct racism. Throughout the study, Imani felt she was able to grow in her understanding of her own experiences, those of her multi-racial peers, as well as what Youth of Color endure in schools today.

As revealed in the previous chapter, racism and its internalization by Students of Color continues to persist within our educational system, and is a cycle that is passed from one generation to the next. The stories and observations of the Women of Color Educators highlight the role of the teacher in perpetuating racism. However, the women in this study believe that educators can also be agents of change, and are committed to breaking the cycle of racism in their own classrooms.

Brazilian education activist, Paulo Freire (1970), argued that to create true social change, people must have critical consciousness, a state developed through critical dialogue of the experiences of oppressed peoples. Through individual and focus group

interviews, this study created the space for twelve Women of Color to critically reflect and dialogue about educational inequity through the lens of their own life experiences. Echoing Imani, the women articulated that this study proved important for their personal growth. They expressed that the cross-racial dialogues helped them to define a more concrete perspective about the complex nature of racism and internalized racism in schools. Using select quotes from the data, this chapter will address last research sub-question of this study.

5. What impact did the dialogues and structure of the study have on the Women of Color Educators who participated?

I will highlight three main ways in which the women in this study describe this space as beneficial to their development as educators: 1) reflection and dialogue; 2) cross-cultural understanding; and 3) addressing racism in their own classrooms.

A Space for Reflection and Dialogue

Enduring and internalizing racism is not easy to overcome, as racism can have a deep and lasting psychological impact on an individual (Smith, 2004). Oftentimes, people will try to block out these assaults, but it has been demonstrated that one of the best ways to address and heal from racism is to discuss it (Watts-Jones, 2002). The participants in this study, who continually experience racism, believed that as social

justice educators, it is fundamental to acknowledge and dialogue about race in the context of education. They felt their courses in TEP, however, did not truly support critical discussions about race and racism. They did feel, though, that the structure of both the individual and focus group interviews encouraged these types of dialogues, facilitating discussion around sensitive issues and experiences relating to race.

Many women expressed that they located what they were missing in their teacher education in this study. They found the discussions useful on a personal level, but also in their development as critical educators. Sonia was one of those teachers. While she was disappointed by the lack of discussion around race and racism in schools within TEP, she was grateful at the opportunity of the interviews to reflect on her own educational experiences, as well as what it means to be a South Asian teacher. She commented,

After the interview, I felt a sense of relief. Throughout TEP, I haven't had a chance to speak about my own experience with racism during my education. It's something that I have thought and spoke about in the past, but not within the context of becoming a teacher myself. It was great to be able to think about these issues again, and really reflect on what my role as a South Asian teacher will be in the classroom.

As we recruit Teachers of Color into the profession, we must also begin to shift teacher education to recognize their experiences as unique from White teachers. As revealed in chapter 4, Sonia felt her K-12 education often overlooked her race and culture. Similarly, she felt TEP neglected her personal experiences in terms of race- a type of reflection and dialogue she believed was essential in becoming a good teacher. She explained that having the space in the study to speak about racism within her own education brought her

a “sense of relief.” This comment points to a need for improvement within TEP, but also suggests an importance in the topics addressed within this study.

Ashley also found a space of comfort in the study that was lacking from her teacher education program. Through the focus group interviews, she realized the value in dialogue when facilitated effectively, and felt the study sparked genuine interactions that were missing from her novice seminar. Ashley stated,

More than anything, tonight I realized how valuable spaces for dialogue are... The difference between our focus group space and my novice seminar is the facilitation and comfort that sparks genuine, emotional, truthful dialogue amongst pre-service teachers. I understand that it is hard to create a space where people trust each other enough to be frank about their feelings and thoughts, but after sitting in our focus group, I realized that it is possible.

Ashley appreciated the interviews as a place for reflection and dialogue; something she wished could exist within TEP. Developing as a teacher involves critical self-reflection, and it is important to have teacher educators that can support an environment of trust and community for this type of growth (Freire, 1998). Ashley felt that, because the conversations of the study were genuine and comfortable, the women in the study were able to trust each other enough to candidly express their experiences, feelings and thoughts.

Carolina was not very comfortable talking about race or racism when she started the study. During the individual interview she had a difficult time defining terms regarding race, ethnicity, racism and discrimination, and struggled in characterizing her own racial identity. Recognizing that these topics are important to teaching and may

come up in her classroom, she wanted to develop her own understanding of race and racism and had hoped TEP would have provided her the space to do so. Disappointed, she expressed that this study was “really the only time I had the opportunity to talk about race and racism in TEP.” Agreeing with Carolina, several women in the study reiterated that they wanted to develop skills to address race in their classrooms and only had space to do so during the interviews. This data points to desire and need for TEP to spend some formal and direct time teaching teachers how to think and talk about race and education.

Unlike Carolina, Juliana was very comfortable talking about race and racism before she entered TEP. She grew up in South Los Angeles and joined the program with the desire to return and be a quality teacher in her under-resourced high school. Unfortunately, because of the nature of discussions in class, she felt marginalized in the program. She felt that none of her peers really understood or cared about the problems that students from her community faced. Like Ashley, she expressed the space created by the focus groups in the study brought her a sense of community. She commented, “Before meeting up with this group, I felt that no one in TEP remembered the struggle and the students. This group helped me get re-connected to that.” By having a space to discuss issues of race and racism amongst people who had experienced it and who want to challenge it, Juliana felt “re-connected” to the passion for educational equity that initially brought her to this program.

Several women agreed that the discussions within their focus groups re-kindled their enthusiasm for education. Kimmy made the comment that she felt “inspired” after a

focus group discussion. Sonia mentioned that she felt “pumped!” As part of the elementary cohort, JoAnn expressed that she felt isolated from other students based on her perspective. She commented, “There isn’t really a space where people can have these critical conversations about racism that I feel are important in order for people to grow as individuals.” However, whenever she met with her group for the interviews she felt “rejuvenated” and motivated to make social change through teaching.

As we consider teacher education reform, we must recognize the growing cohort of Women of Color Educators and that their needs may differ from the majority population of White female teachers. While White teachers who teach Students of Color must learn about the experience of racism, most Teachers of Color have had personal experiences with racism that inform and influence the way they see the world. We cannot use the same texts and tactics that assume teachers are outsiders to the racialized experiences of Youth of Color in urban schools. We also cannot take for granted that because Teachers of Color may have experienced racism, they are fully equipped to navigate and facilitate the race relations of classrooms and schools. In order to develop their potential as critical educators, Teachers of Color need the space to discuss the racism of their education, their current realities with race, and even the race relations they face within teacher education (King, 1993).

Whether or not the women in the study were comfortable discussing race, they all felt it was important to have those conversations and hoped it could have been a formal part of their teacher education. TEP is a social justice program dedicated to developing

quality teachers for underserved schools that serve Students of Color; however, it does not seem to be addressing the needs of some of its own Students of Color. The study facilitated a space that was important for those individuals who wanted to develop skills around addressing race in the classroom, as well as for those who needed to feel there was a community of people who understood the struggles of their students. In addition to providing a space for reflection and dialogue about racism, because these dialogues happened in multi-racial settings, this study also became a place for the development of cross-cultural understanding.

Cross Cultural Understanding

Los Angeles is a city with racial and ethnic diversity from all over the world. Along with its rich multiculturalism, however, are the social and economic struggles of many racial and ethnic communities. As schools do not exist in vacuums, societal issues often reveal themselves in schools and classrooms (DiMassa, 2005). To navigate and address the complex multicultural terrain of urban schools, it is important for teachers to have understanding of the different racial and ethnic communities that comprise our society, as well as the issues and concerns they face.

Even though many women in the study shared that discussions of racial discrimination with family and friends were commonplace, most revealed that those conversations tended to happen in racially insular settings. Many of the women had parallel experiences with racism within their education; however, very few had ever

discussed these events in multi-racial settings. Without experience talking about race and racism with people who differ racially or ethnically, a majority of the women felt they had limited understanding of the manifestation of racism in communities outside their own. To gain insight, and challenge cultural misconceptions, it is important for teachers to be exposed to the complex cultures and struggles of the communities they teach.

The focus group interviews facilitated inter-racial discussions about topics of race and racism, and allowed for cross-racial sharing of experiences and perspectives. This resulted in the development of multicultural understanding amongst the Women of Color Educators, which was also important to their development as critical educators of diverse urban classrooms. In this section, I will share several examples of cross-racial engagement and understanding that occurred within the interviews, through discussions of 1) names and ethnic pride, 2) accents and belonging; and 3) the importance of cross-cultural dialogue.

Names and Ethnic Pride

Within the study, there were often discussions that revealed differences or parallels in the racialized experiences of the multicultural group of Women of Color. While each woman has a unique and complex story, the conversation allowed for Black, Latina and Asian American educators to understand that racism is something that affects all of their lives. Whether or not the conversations specifically tied to the classroom, by seeing where their racialized experiences diverge and overlap, the women were able to

gain valuable exposure to multicultural perspectives. Developing a deep and layered understanding of the lives of people who differ is something that can only aid the practice and pedagogy of teachers in diverse settings. Teachers who recognize the complexity of people and culture will be better equipped to validate the different experiences that students bring with them into the classroom.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Elaine witnessed a teacher who was mispronouncing the names of one of her recent immigrant students. She expressed how the teacher's disregard for the student's name and identity reinforced the racial hierarchy. Sharing this encounter with the focus group led into a personal discussion about names, where Janet and Elaine both revealed that they did not have names from their ethnic communities because their parents were afraid of situations similar to what Elaine had seen while student teaching. Even though they understood that their parents were trying to protect them from racism, they both expressed how having an Anglo-Saxon name made them feel disconnected from their culture and roots. Janet shared,

I still complain to this day, why didn't I get a more Mexican name? People always ask me, "Wait, you're Mexican and your name's Janet Christine? Not even Janette Christina?" and I'm like, "No, Janet Christine." Don't ask me what my dad was thinking. He's been here since he was seven, so I think for him it was more that he went through a lot growing up, and [he] didn't want [me] to have to go through the same.

Empathizing with Janet's longing to have a cultural name, Elaine responded, "I don't even have a Korean name, so...my name is [Elaine] Grace... I never really understood why [my mom] didn't go for a Korean name, but it's probably also to make it

easier.” Like Janet, Elaine shared that her mom had a lot of problems because of her Korean name when she moved to the US and probably didn’t want her daughter to experience the same difficulties. Elaine, however, endured a different set of challenges than her mom; she felt her “easier,” non-Korean name disconnected her from Korean culture.

Janet is Mexican American and Elaine is Korean American, yet they have very similar stories about their names. Both women’s parents gave them names they thought would be easier for their children to live with within the US. Even though they understood their parent’s reasoning, they both felt disappointed that their names did not connect them to their ethnic heritage. Despite their different backgrounds, an open discussion about these experiences allowed Janet and Elaine to see cross-racial commonalities in their personal struggles with ethnic identity.

Deanna and Alexis, the two Black women in the group listened carefully as Janet and Elaine spoke. They shared, because African Americans were robbed of cultural names due to slavery, the women could not exactly relate to Janet and Elaine’s struggles. They added that the origin of many common names given to African American children is important to consider when understanding Black American culture. Alexis shared, “[For us] it’s even more complicated because we were brought here as slaves, and we were given new names, so none of can really be like, ‘Oh, I’m from the Zulu tribe.’ No black person in America really knows what their ancestors’ names are, so there’s nothing to reclaim from that.”

Deanna agreed. She furthered the conversation by explaining that some African American parents try to connect to their heritage by naming their children words from an African language. She also felt that when African American parents give their children names that seem “arbitrary,” they are often trying to distance themselves from the European names passed along through slavery.

All the women in this focus group session were able to build on the discussion around names and heritage. Although Alexis and Deanna had a different experience with the importance and origin of names than Janet and Elaine, they all felt that names have an important connection to ethnic pride. The women agreed that whether cultural names were stripped during slavery, or rejected today out of fear of discrimination, names are a subtle way in which the racial hierarchy is maintained. Hearing each other’s stories helped the women to realize the way this issue plays out in multiple racial and ethnic communities, and have a more sensitive understanding around the significance of names. Several of the educators mentioned that this understanding highlighted the deep connection between names and culture, and thus, motivated them to apply care when considering the names of their students.

Accents

Speaking like the majority plays a major role in your acceptance into a certain community or context. “Accents” are often a way in which people are identified as an insider or an outsider. In an education context, the way one speaks is often connected to

culture and perceived intelligence. During one of the focus group interviews, several of the women began to engage in a discussion about their accents. They shared that their manner of speech often played a role in the way they were stereotyped in school. Unfortunately, many women internalized the racist ideology embedded in these stereotypes, and this affected how they saw themselves both culturally and intellectually.

JoAnn grew up in a working class Latina/o neighborhood in the South side of Pomona. Although she spoke English, when she got to her predominantly White college, she received many comments about her “accent” from her White peers. These remarks made her very self-conscious, and internalize the idea that she was inferior. JoAnn shared with the group,

Through elementary, junior high and high school, we all kind of had the same accent. We all sounded the same. When I started college, I would get White guys telling me, “Oh, you sound like a chola, but don’t worry, it’s cute!” They already start putting you in a box and you begin internalize that. Like I don’t speak Standard English. I don’t have a White accent- I’m never gonna fit in.

Based on the way JoAnn spoke, an accent she developed with her family, friends and community, she was labeled a “chola” when she got to college. “Chola” is a Spanish word used to describe a female “gangster.” It bothered JoAnn that even though she worked so hard in school, because of stereotypes associated with her “accent” she was viewed as a “gangster.” It began to affect her academic engagement. She began to internalize that she was not as smart or competent, and never wanted to participate in class.

After JoAnn shared this emotional story about her internalized racism, Juliana responded by describing her own negative experiences with accents. She expressed that growing up in a predominantly Black neighborhood, she dropped Spanish and practiced speaking English in order to fit in. But as a light skinned Latina with no accent, whenever she said that she was Mexican, no one would believe her. Juliana stated,

I don't Speak Spanish that well. I always practiced my English because I grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Watts. That used to keep me from some communities growing up. They would tell me I wasn't Mexican enough because I didn't speak Spanish that well, or I wasn't dark enough. I remember always feeling, where do I go then? I'm not really accepted anywhere.

Because Juliana grew up in a neighborhood where she was the minority, she felt pressure to let go of her culture and assimilate to the accent of the Black majority around her.

Because of her speech adaptation to the majority, however, she was not seen as Mexican enough when she was around her community. Juliana explained how her lack of Spanish or "Mexican accent" felt disconnecting from her own ethnic community, and left her feeling alienated.

Imani grew up in Santa Monica speaking Standard English, and similar to Juliana, felt marginalized from her racial community based on her accent. Imani attended diverse schools, but was never around a significant Black population. Whenever she would get around peers of her own racial group, they would label her as "White." Imani commented,

What you are saying is reminding me of what Black people thought about the way that I talked in my own community. They would tell me, "You

talk White,” and label me the girl from Santa Monica. [It would hurt] when Black people would tell me that. I wanted to know that culture so much, cause I didn’t experience it that much in Santa Monica. But to not really be embraced by them, and just kind of be pushed into a box- okay, you’re not like other Black people, so you just can’t kick it- that was kind of hard for me.

Like JoAnn, Imani was judged and deemed an outsider based on her accent. However, for Imani it was her own racial peers that rejected her. She shared, to not be embraced by her racial community because of the way she spoke had a negative affect on the way she saw herself as a Black woman.

Ashley built onto this discussion by sharing another perspective about being a Black woman with a “White” accent. Always attending predominantly White schools, Ashley was embraced by her teachers for speaking in a way that was considered “White.” She was often pitted against the few Black children in her school by being told that she was different and better. Ashley described,

The way I spoke- because it was considered White- was embraced by my teachers. I was often put up on a pedestal for being the model Black student. I was always taught, “Well, Ashley’s different.” Or, “Ashley’s very articulate; her vocabulary is extraordinary.” They would always push that the way I speak is much different than those other [Black] kids. But once in a while I would slip up, and say “ain’t” or something, and my classmates would be like, “Ew! Why are you talking like that? YOU don’t talk like that.”

Unlike JoAnn, Juliana and Imani who were made to feel bad for their accents, Ashley was made to feel that she was better than other Black children because she spoke in a way that was considered White. She was told she was “different,” “articulate,” and “extraordinary” compared to her Black peers. These statements are hard to pinpoint as

racial insults, because they can seem like compliments. In actuality, however, they are subtle daily forms of racism that Critical Race Theorists have labeled as racial microaggressions (Solórzano, Allen & Carroll, 2002). Through these comments, Ashley's teachers and classmates reinforced the idea that Standard English is superior and Black forms of speech are inferior. As a result, Ashley internalized this racism, and believed that she was superior to her less "articulate," less "extraordinary" Black counterparts.

In their development as teachers, it was useful for JoAnn, Juliana, Imani and Ashley to reflect on and share their experiences with racism and accents in a supportive setting. It was also important for the women to hear that their struggles with speech and accent existed across race, ethnicity, class and context. The women expressed that hearing each other's narratives helped them to heal, as well as heightened their awareness about issues of language and accents with their own students.

The Importance of Cross Cultural Dialogue

Within the focus groups, there were numerous examples like the two above, where the women shared commonalities and divergences in their experiences about various subjects relating to race, racism and education. As Women of Color, they found these conversations useful and significant to their development as teachers preparing for multicultural classrooms, and expressed so throughout the interviews and reflections.

Janet appreciated the different perspectives that the women brought to the conversation. She mentioned, "I really liked that I was able to be in a mixed group of

women who all brought different experiences and ideas to the table; even if they were from the same ethnic background.” A common misconception when addressing the needs of People of Color is that certain racial or ethnic categories are one monolithic group. This essentialization of race and culture can be problematic, because as Kris Gutierrez (2004) cleverly points out, even though piñatas are often a part of Mexican culture, “100% of Mexicans are not hitting piñatas 100% of the time.” By listening to multiple women from different racial, ethnic, class and generational backgrounds, Janet was able to appreciate the complexity and diversity that exists within experiences of race and racism.

Carolina felt similarly. As someone who entered the study not very comfortable talking about race, she expressed that the focus groups helped her to learn more about race and racism. She also gained insight and appreciation for herself, as well as about other Women of Color. Carolina revealed,

Through this project, I gained insight on my peers’ experiences with race/racism. It differs in terms of where we grew up, whether we were 1st, 2nd, etc... generation. I’m still learning about me, and there’s much more to learn, but I feel like I have more of an appreciation for other Women of Color, including those in my own race.

Through the group conversations, Carolina realized variances in the manifestations of racism in the lives of Women of Color across many factors. She found their experiences differed if they were from urban centers or the suburbs, or if they were immigrants or if their families had been in the US for generations. These “insights” helped Carolina to develop a comfort and skill talking and thinking about race and racism within education.

Even though there were many differences, JoAnn was struck by the parallel experiences of numerous Women of Color with racism and education. After the first focus group, she commented, "It was just astonishing how so many of us have similar experiences in regards to racial discrimination. When I hear all of us speak in the group I can relate to everyone because I have also experienced similar incidents." Sonia agreed with JoAnn; she also felt connected to everyone's stories. Because of her appreciation for and growth from the dialogue, she also felt that interracial discussions about race, racism and education were something every teacher should experience. She asserted,

I feel that the dialogue we had today is absolutely essential for all teachers, before and during their teaching. It was really powerful to hear from everyone, and note the similarities and differences between our experiences. I really connected with at least one thing everyone had shared, and I especially liked what was said about racism always being there. Our experiences with it will never go away. It's something that we will always have to reflect and grow from, which is why it is so crucial to constantly talk about it

Sonia argued that interracial discussions about race and racism within the context of education are something "essential for all teachers." She believed that, because racism is consistently part of the lives of People of Color, it is necessary to continually engage in dialogue about racialized experiences. Like JoAnn and Sonia, many of the women shared that they were moved by the interactions and felt the focus groups were a powerful means to connect women across racial and ethnic boundaries.

One example of this came from Kimmy. During one of the focus groups, several of the women discussed strategies of dodging the internalization of the racism they

experienced, and maintaining ethnic pride. Kimmy shared that her strategy was her parents. In the 1940's, both her parents' families were forced into Japanese internment camps, losing all their property and material wealth. Due to this traumatic encounter with American racism, Kimmy's mother and father took painstaking efforts to teach their daughter Japanese and Japanese American history and culture. With a great deal of encouragement and support from her parents, every project in school that she had the opportunity to do so, was dedicated to researching the struggles and accomplishments of her ethnic community.

Ashley was very struck by Kimmy's perspective. In response, she expressed that as a Black woman in a predominantly White school, she was not taught her history. She also expressed that, as an African American, there was only so much history she could access about her heritage. After the focus group discussion, Kimmy shared in a reflection that hearing Ashley's perspective about her own heritage helped her to rethink her understanding about her own life and the lives of other African Americans. Kimmy commented,

One thing that I especially liked hearing about was Ashley talking about not having [understanding of her] heritage because this was something that I was aware of in the African American community, but I had never really considered. It inspires me to ask her about that, because it is the opposite of what I feel I have undergone during my lifetime, and would love to hear more about.

Hearing a perspective different than her own inspired Kimmy to learn more. Before the discussion, she had "never really considered" the limited access African Americans have

to personal history and heritage before slavery. She also never truly appreciated how lucky she was to have access to her own history and heritage. Through this exchange, she gained a newfound sensitivity to her own identity, as well as the identities of her future African American students.

The focus groups were facilitated to gain understanding about the role of race and racism in the experiences and perspectives of Women of Color educators. Because they were constructed in interracial cohorts, they also served as spaces for cross-cultural understanding. The women in the group were able to think through important topics about education, and life generally, in diverse company. These dialogues offered new ways of seeing and understanding the world, which was useful in both their personal growth, as well as their development as teachers with multicultural classrooms.

Addressing Racism in their own Classrooms

Teachers of Color are a small minority of the population of educators in the United States. As revealed earlier in this dissertation, The National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) reports that 90% of all public school teachers are White, and that more than 40% of schools do not even employ one Teacher of Color. As we increase the diversity of the teaching force, we are helping to validate the various rich cultures of youth in this country. But is it enough to just put Teachers of Color in front of Students of Color? As revealed in this research, through racism, many non-White students have been taught to perceive the dominant culture as better than their own. If we

want effective socially and racially conscious Teachers of Color, it is fundamental to provide spaces for them to reflect and heal from the racism they have endured. In addition, we must also give them the room to develop strategies to consciously and proactively interrupt racism in school.

This study not only provided space for women to gain insights about their personal lives and educational experiences, but also pushed them to think about their own classrooms. Having in-depth dialogues about race, racism and education motivated many of the Women of Color educators to think about how to be racially and culturally conscious through their curriculum and practice. Kimmy was one of those women. Thinking back to how she reacted when one of her Black students said to a Latino peer, “Speak English! This is America,” she said she felt “ashamed” because she was not prepared to deal with racial assaults between her students. Participating in one of the focus group discussions pushed her to proactively consider how to address racial tension at school. Kimmy commented, “This conversation made me think more about how I’m going to deal with racism in the classroom. I need to start thinking of potential situations and ways that I can positively and constructively deal with them so I will be ready when they come up.” An important step in teacher education is being prepared for issues that may arise in the pre-service classroom. The discussions in the study enabled Kimmy the space and motivation to think deeply about how to prepare and create a positive space for her students.

Elaine agreed that being able to address racism is something necessary for all teachers to think about before they enter the classroom. Elaine felt the study gave her the space to do so. She expressed, "I like that we are actually addressing racism in our community and students. This is definitely something we need to be prepared for. Even in the first grade class I was student teaching in, I benefited from this project in how to approach racism and discrimination." Racism manifests in schools as early as Kindergarten (Rist, 1973), so it is important for teachers of all grades to be adept in identifying it and intervening. Elaine felt the study did just that, giving her tools to approach racial discrimination at the elementary school level.

Janet was motivated by the focus group conversations to have a community feeling in her classroom. Being exposed to different perspectives in the group, she gained comfort talking about race and racism, as well as acquired skills to address these issues and build community with her students. Janet described,

From this project, I feel I gained a lot, because I really learned a lot from different people's perspectives. I feel much more comfortable talking about race/racism and how to be able to guide discussion questions with my students in the classroom when the topic arises, and how to show them how to build a community amongst themselves, regardless of their different backgrounds.

Research has demonstrated that community building improves student communication, levels of trust, and thus increases academic achievement (Maslow, 1962; Child Development Project, 1998). In sum, it is an essential part of any successful classroom. Having cross-racial dialogues about race, racism and education within the

focus groups has helped Janet's comfort level with facilitating sensitive discussions and building trust and bonds within her multicultural classroom of students.

Alexis also learned from the diverse perspectives in the study. She taught in a predominantly Black high school with a growing Latina/o population. Through participating in the conversations and being exposed to multiple perspectives, she decided to represent cultures beyond the scope of her students within her curriculum. Alexis explained,

I gained valuable insights and perspectives that differ from mine- perspectives on discussing race in the classroom. This project has encouraged me to include cultural education of students besides Blacks and Latinos, which are all I have as students: for example, Asians, Indians and even Whites.

As our society grows and diversifies it is important for youth to be exposed to multiple cultures. This study created a space for Alexis to have more understanding and motivation to include diverse perspectives in the education of her students.

In addition to just discussing how to address racial discrimination in the classroom, all the women in the study participated in brainstorming and lesson planning sessions to help build community across race and cultures in their classrooms. Although developing concrete lesson plans with six women from different subject and grade levels was challenging, the different groups were able to come up with basic topics they felt were important to facilitate with their students.

In teaching high school history to a class of Black and Brown students, Sonia expressed that she could not figure out how to engage her African American students

about immigration. She came to the group wanting help. Collectively, the group agreed it was important to address the racial disconnects between Black and Latina/o students. They decided to create lessons to expose students to a Latina/o and African American shared struggle, as it relates to immigration. They developed four themes within the unit: 1) Migration and Integration, 2) Comparing Slave Legislation to Citizenship and Naturalization legislation, 3) Showing parallels between Deportation in immigrant communities and incarceration in African American communities, and 3) Resistance: Marching to Know your Rights. The women were concerned about creating lessons for students they did not yet know; but together, they outlined these different themes to provide the foundation for lesson planning during the school year. They were able to pool their subject matter knowledge and cultural perspectives to develop interdisciplinary ways of approaching issues of racial injustice, and cross-cultural understanding.

The other group approached this topic from an English perspective. They decided to develop student anthologies for their classrooms across different grade levels. Some of the members of the focus group did not feel that a class lesson on different races and cultures was adequate to address racism and discrimination. The women collectively wrote into their lesson plan that through their discussions they realized that friendships and community within a space are the only things that can truly challenge stereotypes and generalizations about different groups. They decided to plan lessons that cultivated experiential knowledge and interaction between students. The women created both middle school and high school units that involved students interviewing each other,

learning about each other's lives and compiling a book that brought everyone's experiences together (See Lesson Plan). Their plan was to implement these units into their classroom as a way of community building and developing cross-cultural understanding amongst their diverse student bodies.

Although some women were more concrete than others in terms of the lesson plans, all appreciated being able to work together and to have the space to think about how to build safe, community based classroom environments, free from racial tension and discrimination. Whether or not they used these lessons, it was important for them to begin thinking about how to develop positive student relationships across race, ethnicity and culture. Collectively planning also helped the women to see each other's diverse strengths and knowledge.

Conclusion

Paulo Freire argued that only through critical dialogue could people develop a critical consciousness (1970). The Women of Color Educators in this study enacted Freire's belief. Through discussions within the study, they all gained something important in their development as critical educators. Within the focus groups, they found space to have critical race conversations that were missing from the structure of their teacher education program. They also expressed that personal reflection in a multi-racial setting allowed them to deepen their cross-cultural understanding. In addition, being able to collectively brainstorm how to address race, racism and racial tensions with their

students helped them to pro-actively consider how to challenge injustice in their future classrooms. As revealed by the voices of the Women of Color Educators, the structure of this study was a positive model of teacher education for Teachers of Color.

Through this research project, it has been demonstrated that non-White teachers often carry a personal perspective on race, racism and education that tends to be ignored within traditional approaches to urban teacher education. It is not enough to just recruit racial minority teachers. As their numbers grow within teacher education programs, we must also consider how to teach them. The data from this study suggests that formally incorporating discussions about topics included in this research into the structure of TEP could be beneficial to the both the growth and the satisfaction of pre-service Teachers of Color.

When we consider the teacher education of Teachers of Color, it is important to acknowledge what they have in common, but it is also essential to recognize that they are not one monolithic group. Their experiences, perspectives and strengths are not all the same. If you are a recent immigrant or your family has lived here for generations, or if you speak another language or English is all you know, or if you grew up in a predominantly White setting or a predominantly Black setting- all of these things have an affect on the way you see the world, and what you bring to the classroom. All of the women in this study were from different contexts and backgrounds, and highlighting their differences was as important as emphasizing their similarities. If we truly believe that the presence of Black, Latina/o and Asian American teachers are important to the success of

Youth of Color, we must acknowledge and appreciate their unique and diverse strengths and experiences, and also identify and serve their needs within teacher education.

Chapter 6

Implications of the Research

As a Black woman in a predominantly White school, Ashley endured racism in her education. Based on these experiences, she internalized inferiority about herself and her racial community. As she grew up, and began to heal from her racialized trauma, Ashley decided to become a teacher to intervene on racism and the racial hierarchy within education. Teaching in a predominantly Black middle school, she noticed that her students faced many of the same racial indignities she endured as a child, and were also internalizing racism. Through this study, she was able to discuss and connect her experiences to those of her students in a way that helped her develop critical strategies to address racism in her classroom. She also built community with other Women of Color Educators in a way that was missing from her program. Ashley took a lot from the study, but also offers us many insights for K-12 and teacher education reform, as well as issues with racism and education that we must continue to explore through research.

Like Ashley, the Women of Color Educators in this study told stories of racial epithets, invisibility in the curriculum, and racial stereotypes inflicted upon Youth of Color in K-12 schools. We heard how these experiences affected the way these youth viewed themselves, their community and the world around them. This study shows us that teachers have the power to enact racism, but also have the power to break the cycle of racism in the classroom. Sharing devastating racialized experiences within the supportive and community based environment of the study, the Women of Color

Educators have been able to reflect on and heal from the racism in their education. They have also been able to use those negative experiences to understand their own students and develop positive learning environments for them.

As our teaching force continues to diversify, the women in this study remind us that it is essential to acknowledge the experiences, strengths and needs of Teachers of Color. We have much to learn about racism, internalized racism, education and passion for change from the stories and dialogues shared in this dissertation. Building off of literature around internalized racism and the teacher education of Teachers of Color, in this chapter, I will highlight several of the important lessons we can take from the voices of the Women of Color Educators. I will describe 1) the implications of the research findings on teacher education; 2) the theoretical contributions; 3) the limitations of this study; and 4) how those limitations inform future research on Teachers of Color.

Implications for Teacher Education

Critical Race Theory in Education pushes research to be transformative and to challenge racism in our society and our educational institutions (Yosso, 2005). Much of the current literature is focused on the recruitment and retention of racial minority teachers (Becket, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Villegas & Clewell, 1998). This dissertation, framed in CRT, was designed to intervene on the Eurocentric practices of teacher education, and to help TEP better serve its commitment to social justice and its diverse student population. This study offers insight on how teacher education can adapt

to better serve the increasingly diverse teaching force. In this section, I will highlight the Women of Color Educators' suggestions for change, the manner in which their voices impacted reform within TEP, as well as how this study developed into an established organization of Women of Color Educators.

Women of Color Educators Suggestions for Change

TEP is a unique teacher education program. With a mission for social justice, it has a commitment to improving underperforming schools that serve Students of Color. The program believes that a diverse teaching force and critical pedagogy are important components to challenging educational inequity. TEP is far ahead of many teacher education programs in terms of its progressive practices; even so, the leaders of the program admit it still has much work to do. While it successfully recruits activist Teachers of Color, there is still a range in the levels of critical consciousness of its pre-service teacher population, and faculty are still figuring out how to serve this diverse population of teachers effectively.

Within the focus groups, there were several critical discussions of problems with TEP, but the Women of Color Educators also offered many constructive suggestions for improving TEP for pre-service Teachers of Color. Sonia expressed that TEP had an entire class dedicated to exploring the identity of teachers, but felt that course did not effectively challenge the issue of privilege. She believed that most teachers in the program had some amount of privilege, whether racial, class, gender, or just for being

affiliated to a prestigious program like TEP. She thought TEP could produce more critical and effective educators of Youth of Color if the concept of privilege was more deeply interrogated. Sonia shared,

I want to have a dialogue around privilege that's more challenging. We just talked about the definition of privileges and we never questioned each other's privilege. I think I would have definitely benefited from that. I feel like the program could have benefited as a whole if people were more challenged, especially around privilege.

Due to the level of education required to be a teacher, regardless of where or how they grew up, most K-12 educators have some amount of privilege. In classrooms of low-income Students of Color, depending on factors including a teacher's education, race, class, age, and gender, the result can be an unconscious power dynamic (Kunjufu, 2002). Sonia believed that the discussions around privilege within TEP were at a surface level, and that the entire program could have benefited from having a challenging, self-reflective discussion around this topic. If our goal is to produce critical educators, they must be self-reflective and aware of their position and privilege in society. TEP and teacher education generally, could benefit from including a critical examination of privilege into their curriculum.

In addition to interrogating identity, JoAnn felt that many teachers were unaware of history and culture specific to Black and Latino communities in Los Angeles. She heard many of her students express negative beliefs about their neighborhoods such as, "We live in the ghetto." She also heard many of her peers express the same negative

beliefs, saying things such as, “I teach in the ghetto.” She believed this deficit thinking could be disrupted if teachers were required to learn about the history and culture of Latinos and African Americans in Los Angeles. JoAnn argued,

I think everyone in TEP needs to take a class on [Latino and African American] history culture in Los Angeles... Learning where the kids are from and just putting it in that context could help teachers understand their circumstances because a lot of us did not grow up in those areas. We might have grown up in similar areas, but it was back in the day, so things have changed. We need to understand our students more.

It has been demonstrated that teachers can benefit from exposure to the history and current day realities of communities from the neighborhoods in which they teach (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Howard, 2003). As a working-class Chicana, JoAnn shared many aspects of culture and history with her predominantly low-income and Latino elementary school students. She explained, however, that growing up in the Inland Empire in a working-class Latino neighborhood meant living in small houses with backyards and open spaces, while instead, her students lived in dense apartment buildings near downtown Los Angeles. Through her own experiences and observations, JoAnn realized that being Latino in downtown Los Angeles is a unique experience that should be understood and honored by those who teach there. She argued, a course that overviewed the history and context of specific communities in which educators teach could challenge their racial stereotypes and/or monolithic understandings of culture, and help them to better understand their students.

Like JoAnn, Kimmy had a suggestion for TEP that could heighten a multifaceted understanding of race, ethnicity and culture amongst teachers, while also providing space for community building within cohorts. Inspired by the discussion of the study, she advocated for teachers within the program to interview each other about their lives and educational experiences. Tyrone Howard (2003) conducted research revealing that teacher reflection is essential in developing a culturally relevant pedagogy. While he argued that teachers must reflect on their own lives and the lives of their students, Kimmy felt that reflecting on the experiences of peers, and considering the impact of those experiences, could help teachers develop a more complex understanding of different racial and ethnic communities. "I feel like this study is so nice and I'm hearing all these things that I had never really considered and all of us are really considering our experiences and what they mean. That would be really exciting if we could share that with each other in a bigger way." As revealed in Chapter 5, because it differed so much from her own life experience as a Japanese American, hearing Ashley's perspective about African Americans and history "inspired" Kimmy. That discussion motivated her to consider new and different viewpoints in understanding the world, something Kimmy felt was essential in being a culturally sensitive teacher. She felt that all teachers could benefit from listening and learning from others, and that an interview could formalize that practice into the program.

Sonia, JoAnn and Kimmy offer three concrete content suggestions for improving TEP and teacher education that involved challenging privilege, a course on African

American and Latino history in Los Angeles and community building within cohorts. Some of the other proposals from the participants included diversifying the faculty, proactive facilitation of discussions on race and racism, and an analysis of the racial dynamics within the program itself. The Women of Color Educators felt that changing teacher education in these ways would acknowledge the experiences, diversity and strengths of Teachers of Color. In addition, it would also allow for a complex and layered understanding of race, ethnicity and culture, and improve the pedagogy of all teachers who engage in these practices.

Reform within TEP

This dissertation not only provided space for Women of Color Educators to express their beliefs about improving the program, but their opinions were also utilized for programmatic reform. One of the strengths of TEP is that the leaders of the program want to serve its students well, and are open to change. As I sifted through the transcripts of the study, I began to see that there was an absence within TEP and an interest in pre-service teachers for a focused exploration of race and racism in the context of K-12 education. I brought these findings to the director of the program, suggested that we create a course to address this need, and presented a potential syllabus. In Fall 2007, for the first time, TEP offered “Race, Racism and K-12 Education” to secondary teachers as an alternative course to the Social Foundations of Education.

Based on the suggestions of the Women of Color Educators, this class introduced students to a multicultural perspective about race, racism and its impact on US K-12 education. It situated today's educational inequity in a historical perspective, while encouraging a connection between theory and practice, as well as personal experience and classroom teaching. The readings and discussions allowed students to explore pre-desegregation conditions for Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Latina/o and indigenous students, understand the historical context of desegregation, and learn of the continued manner in which racism manifests in schools today (See Appendix: Syllabus)

The course was rigorous with many more writing assignments than the alternative sections; however, because there was such an interest in the subject matter, it was enrolled to capacity. There were Black, Asian American, Latina/o and White students enrolled in the class. Although they were the minority in the course, having White students engaged in these discussions did create a different space and energy than the study. Many White teachers had not interrogated why they wanted to teach in Communities of Color, and expressed some resistance to deconstructing whiteness. Even so, because the class centered on race and racism and the experiences of Students of Color, and they chose to be in this space, several of them of them were willing to engage in critical discussions.

To create safe, controlled spaces within a mixed race class, I often broke students into racial/ethnic groups to have fishbowl discussions about specific topics. In addition, because of the limited Black presence in the program, I also met with the Black women

in the course after class on a regular basis so they could privately discuss their feelings and frustrations. I made myself available to talk with anyone, and encouraged their growth as teachers regardless of their comfort or understanding of race and racism.

Based on student evaluations and feedback, the course was overwhelmingly well received, and succeeded in providing a space for critical dialogue and community building. One teacher commented in the evaluation, "I've have been living the last 22 years opposed to prejudice and racism, but never quite analyzed and critiqued my identity as this class forced me to do." Another teacher expressed, "This class provided a safe environment that allowed each of us to discuss issues that are not always easy to talk about. Furthermore, this allowed me to learn a lot about myself, which will without a doubt make me a better teacher." Additionally, one of six African American students in the entire program shared that this class was a major reason for her retention in TEP.

A course like "Race, Racism and K-12 Education" unapologetically centers racism within the examination of US education. It pushes students to understand their own identity and education in the context of structural oppression and inequity. Built off of the design and findings of this study, this class used self-reflection and dialogue to encourage pre-service teachers to engage with each other and develop a critical consciousness around race and the classroom. Although this syllabus could be used within any teacher education program, because of the sensitive nature of the content, it is important to recognize that the facilitation of this course is the key to its success. Instructors who teach this course must be comfortable interrogating their own identity,

and must be open to leading and mediating emotional and heated discussions in the classroom.

An Organization of Women of Color Educators

This dissertation also contributed to change beyond TEP; it led to the development of an organization called Women of Color Educators (WOCE). As highlighted in Chapter 5, dialogue is an essential part of developing a critical pedagogy to challenge oppression (Freire, 1970). The participants reiterated Freire's philosophy because, while the dynamics of the two groups in the study were different, all the women felt the space was important to their development as critical educators. They found the study to be a place of support and community, and appreciated the opportunity to reflect and heal from their experiences with racism, build positive inter-racial relationships, and collectively strategize how to create successful anti-racist classrooms.

Both groups of women wanted to continue to meet as the study ended. While Group 1 hoped that the structure of the study could be formalized into TEP; the Pupusas took the process into their own hands. They designed WOCE as a community based organization, so they did not have to rely on TEP administration to meet beyond the interviews and focus groups. They also wanted to open the dialogue of the study to other Women of Color Educators outside of the study and program. WOCE has a mission to promote community and share resources amongst Women of Color connected to K-12 schooling in the Los Angeles area. It has a listserv with almost thirty members, and

throughout the 2007-2008 school year the group met bi-monthly with events including a Back to School Brunch, a film screening and discussion, a visit to an art exhibit, and several potlucks. The members are mostly new teachers, but there are several aspiring teachers, veteran teachers and former teachers. The development of WOCE demonstrates the need of spaces for Teachers of Color to build community and dialogue. Although organizations are needed to connect educators broadly, teacher education programs can also benefit from structuring time, space and resources to support the networking of racially underrepresented teachers.

The Women of Color Educators in this study add to the literature about Teachers of Color (Menchaca, 2001; Quirocho & Rios, 2001; Rong & Preissle, 1997). Throughout this dissertation, their stories remind us of the racism embedded in both K-12 and teacher education, as well as the strengths that many Teachers of Color enter the field with. As we consider teacher education reform efforts to accommodate the increasing diversity in the teaching force, the suggestions of the women offer many insights. Additionally, the course "Race, Racism and K-12 Education," and the creation of WOCE are practical implications that emerged from this study. All of these insights could be replicated and formally incorporated into the structure of any teacher education program dedicated to social justice and a diverse teaching force.

Theoretical Contributions

Not only does this dissertation have implications for teacher education, but it also has made contributions to Ethnic Studies, as well as the theoretical frameworks of Internalized Racism and Critical Race Theory in education. All of these lenses center race and racism, but tend to be under theorized as they relate to K-12 education. In addition, the unique design of this study offers methodological contributions for all frameworks.

Ethnic Studies

Most research in Ethnic Studies is conducted in mono-racial settings. Scholars of Asian American Studies, Black Studies, Chicana/o Studies and Native American Studies tend to focus on issues within particular communities within one of these categories. While important to study the unique experiences of specific racial communities, it is equally important that we begin to build bridges between the experiences of different Communities of Color. This dissertation explores the education of Asian American, Black and Latina women. It adds to our understanding of their racialized experiences as individuals, as well as part of a collective of Women of Color Educators. In addition, the limited K-12 education research that explores race and racism tends to focus on the experiences of Black and Latino students. By facilitating inter-racial focus groups that include Asian American women, this study helped to build coalitions between three racialized communities that, unfortunately, are often viewed as in conflict.

Internalized Racism

Internalized Racism was one of two theoretical lenses used to frame this study and interpret the data. To date, Internalized Racism has been studied primarily within Psychology (Cokely, 2002; Cross, 1995). For years, many activists and scholars have been concerned with the psychological impact and damage of racism on Communities of Color (bell hooks, 2001; Fanon, 1963; Malcolm X, 1964). The majority of research about this phenomenon is limited to how the inflicted individual feels about himself/herself or his/her racial community, is dedicated to understanding internalized racism within African Americans, and is often examined through surveys and quantitative measures (Cross, 1995; Taylor & Grundy, 1996).

This study pushes our understanding of internalized racism beyond the Black community, by also including an exploration of the manifestations of internalized racism within Latinos and Asians. The research design involved solely qualitative methods, and uses experiential knowledge to understand how racial bias in schools can result in an internalized cultural or racial inferiority.

This dissertation also builds on our theoretical understanding of internalized racism as it is tied to K-12 education. In 1933, Carter G. Woodson wrote that schools were instilling a sense of Black inferiority and White superiority in children. Unfortunately, the data from this study reveals the continued role of schools, curriculum

and teachers in maintaining racial hierarchies. By law, in the US, we require all children to go to school. However, most children are receiving a Eurocentric education. Whether from condoned racism on the playground, omitted accomplishments of Communities of Color in US history class, or a teacher's neglect to learn about their students, Youth of Color are continually sent messages of cultural inferiority. In 1963, Fanon theorized the colonized mind in a post-colonial context; similarly, the oft-invisible nature of White supremacy in schools maintains an inferior self-perception of many Students of Color in this country.

Throughout this dissertation, we see subtle and blatant examples of racism in education and the deep and lasting impact of that racism on the self-perceptions and worldviews of the students who experience it. Many Students of Color have internalized that their home language is wrong, their accent is un-intellectual, or their history is unimportant. Often, this has resulted in the alienation of Students of Color from school. By highlighting the connection between the racial hierarchies of K-12 education and internalized racism, teachers and administrators can begin to see their responsibility in intervening on racism to nurture and cultivate the self-esteems of their students, and those who have experienced internalized racism now have a name for the pain they experienced within their schooling.

Critical Race Theory

Research conceived through a CRT lens must center race and racism, challenge the dominant narrative, value experiential knowledge, have a commitment to social justice and be interdisciplinary (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). As outlined in Chapter 2, the research questions embody all five of these tenets. Additionally, this dissertation is not only guided by CRT, but also pushes the field in two places where CRT in education literature is limited, K-12 education and CRT methods.

CRT is consistently utilized to define issues and concerns within Communities of Color in education, but the majority of that work is in higher education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano, Allen & Carroll, 2002). The research that does address K-12 schooling and teacher education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001) is also often not related to Teachers of Color. This study broadens CRT in education to acknowledge racism that Youth of Color face in schools, as well as the racial issues their teachers confront. By adding to the CRT literature in this way, CRT scholars are more clearly able to understand and address the multifaceted terrain of racism in K-12 education.

Beyond the scope of topics in CRT research, its largest limitation is that it is primarily a theoretical tool. CRT effectively helps to guide research questions and inform analysis (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001)). However, because of limited discourse on how to design CRT research, projects meant to challenge dominant narratives often continue to rely on methods of research designed by the dominant culture. While we are comfortable redefining terms, we must also become comfortable to redefine dominant

research paradigms, steeped with patriarchy and racism. Over the past decade, CRT scholars have been attempting to fill the gap in the literature by constructing CRTM for research (Parker & Lynn, 2002; Pizarro, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005). This dissertation makes a contribution to CRT by providing another unique example of Critical Race Theory Methodology.

Traditional forms of research typically push for understanding, but rarely insist on intervention or transformation. As a Woman of Color educator working with other Women of Color educators, however, it would feel unethical for me to interview about racism without providing a safe space for challenge and empowerment. Rather than taking the stories of racism from Women of Color, this study was designed to build community amongst the participants, and as a space for healing and learning. In addition, the research design constructed focus groups that used personal lived experiences as a pedagogical tool for cross-racial understanding, and strategy building for the teachers to address racism in their future classrooms.

As scholars who want to challenge racism in education, who construct research for the betterment of Communities of Color and who aim to disrupt power dynamics of researcher and participant, it is essential that we begin to acknowledge racism within K-12 schooling and outline CRT research methods that effectively match our theoretical perspective. This dissertation contributes to the field by offering insights for CRT scholars concerned with Youth of Color, Teachers of Color or CRT research design.

Limitations

Despite the contributions of this dissertation to teacher education and to the theoretical lenses of internalized racism and CRT, as we attempt to learn from the study, it is important to also discuss its limitations. We gained many insights about the experiences, observations and perspectives of Teachers of Color; however, we must acknowledge that the Teachers of Color in this study are unique to their own context and life experiences. The boutique nature of the program from which they were sampled, the small number of teachers included in the study, and the limited understanding we still have about Men of Color Educators, Native American teachers and bi-racial and multi-racial teachers all limit our insight about Teachers of Color generally.

As we attempt to generalize the findings of this research to teacher education at large, it is important to acknowledge the specifics of TEP. The program is housed within a highly competitive university in Southern California that eliminated the use of GRE scores in admissions to broaden the student pool. However, participating in the program also requires that students attend school full time for the first year, which has in turn narrowed the pool. Although it is a public institution, tuition obligations can limit the number of teachers with families or financial responsibilities; thus, many of the teachers in the program have recently completed undergraduate degrees. In addition, TEP weighs a commitment to social justice, experience working with children, and exposure to urban settings as three main factors of selection criterion. These categories result in a majority non-White student population with progressive leanings, and many teachers with activist

and organizing backgrounds. These factors all make TEP stand apart from most teacher education programs nationally.

In addition to the unique context of TEP, this study was also limited in the number of participants and their gender and racial diversity. Because of the limited time and funds I had as a graduate student, 12 participants were the most I felt I could recruit and still deeply engage with. In addition, teaching is a female dominated field, and TEP reflects that. For that reason, I only chose female participants for this study. I did not include Native American teachers because no one self identified as such within TEP. Additionally, I could not include every ethnicity from the different Black, Latino or Asian Diasporas. It also seemed complicated to honor the complex experiences of bi-racial or multi-racial participants within this already diverse study, so although their experiences are important and need to be recognized, I did not include participants who identified as such in the dissertation. While the sample I chose was very diverse and offered a complex examination of race and racism in education, there are still many limitations in having just women and Black, Latina and Asian participants when trying to understand the experiences of Teachers of Color. For the reasons above, it becomes necessary that we continue research about Teachers of Color from different schools, regions of the country, and demographic populations.

Future Research

To challenge racial inequity and provide positive classroom spaces for Students of Color of all levels, it is essential that we continue to explore racism, internalized racism and education, as well as the teacher education of Teachers of Color. To further highlight the impact of racism on Youth of Color in schools today, there is a need to conduct research beyond the teacher observations highlighted in this dissertation. Interviews with current K-12 students about their experiences with racism and internalized racism in schools can deepen our understanding of the breadth of this serious issue, and it is important that we explore the opinions of youth on how to address racism in the classroom. Additionally, we must continue to examine the issue of race and racism cross-racially. By identifying parallels and differences in the struggles of diverse Communities of Color, we can begin to build understanding, empathy and solidarity between communities that are often divided.

To more fully develop strategies for teacher education to serve its diverse students, we must continue research that explores the racialized experiences of Teachers of Color within teacher education, as well as their insight for teacher education reform. It would be important to study the experiences of Men of Color Educators, Native American educators, and bi-racial and multi-racial educators. Additionally, because TEP is such a unique setting, it would also be insightful to understand the experiences of Teachers of Color at other universities. Studies that examine the experiences, observations and perspectives of Teachers of Color at predominantly White institutions,

Hispanic serving institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities would provide a deeper understanding of the population as a whole. The more that we continue research about racism, internalized racism, Teachers of Color and teacher education, the more we can unveil the racial hierarchy of White superiority in schools, and break the cycle of racism in the classroom.

Conclusion

Racism is not uncommon in schools. Every day, Youth of Color are subjected to indignities, including low expectations, stereotypes, inadequate resources, and a curriculum that privileges White cultural values (Johnson, 2008; Perez Huber, Johnson, & Kohli, 2006). Within these educational conditions, many youth internalize negative messages about their own culture. All the women in this study had a story to tell about the racism they went through in their own education, but many of them expressed that they had not thought about these things since they happened. Only now, as adults, had they begun to realize how deeply it affected them. Although barely scratching the surface in the process of healing, these interviews functioned to bring voice to oft-unheard stories of Women of Color within education. They were also a way for the women to try and turn their experiences with racism into proactive means to think about culturally relevant, racially conscious teaching strategies.

Teacher education programs often lack strategies and curriculum that acknowledge the strengths and speak to the needs of racial minority teachers. Teachers of

Color often can relate to the racialized experiences of Students of Color because of their own personal experiences. However, many urban teacher education programs continue to teach teachers about racism and inequity as though they are outsiders from this experience. The racism they face on a daily basis is real, and we must provide these Teachers of Color a continual space for sharing, community building and healing. Additionally, we must learn from their stories that they bring many tools and insights to the classroom that are often overlooked. Through the lenses of CRT and Internalized racism, this study validated the racialized realities of the Women of Color Educators, and highlighted their strengths to challenge racism and inequity within education.

Throughout our history, schools have sent the message of White superiority and the inferiority of People of Color. As we continue the struggle against racial inequity in K-12 education, we must recognize the impact of racism on Asian American, Black, Latina/o and Native American youth. We must also acknowledge our responsibility and power as educators to break the cycle of racism, and to nurture and cultivate the positive self-images of our youth.

Appendix
Forms, Protocols and Syllabi

**Pilot Study
Individual Interview Protocol**

The purpose of this interview is to better understand how you have experienced racial or ethnic discrimination in your K-12 education, and also to learn how you think can learn from those experiences in the development of your own pedagogy. I also will be asking questions around your personal educational experiences with racism and how that can affect your own teaching. Be assured that your responses will be held in the strictest professional confidence. If you consent to the use of your answers for this research project and possible publications, please sign below. I want to thank you in advance for your assistance.

Signature of Consent: _____ Date: _____

Print name: _____

*Rita Kohli, Doctoral Student
UCLA, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies*

Section 1

1. Name:
2. Year:
3. Major/Minor(s):
4. Race/Ethnicity:
5. Where you attended K-12:
6. Future career goals:

Section 2

7. Did you witness or personally experience racial/ethnic cultural or linguistic discrimination when you were in middle or high school? Please give me a specific example.
 - Probe for both **macro** and **micro** context.
 - Probe for how they **responded** (or did not respond) immediately.
 - Probe for how they feel that affected them **long term** (their relationship to that teacher, to other students, the subject and school as a whole).

Section 3

8. Did you witness or personally experience racial/ethnic cultural or linguistic discrimination when you were in elementary school? Please give me a specific example:

- Probe for both **macro** and **micro** context.
- Probe for how they **responded** (or did not respond) immediately.
- Probe for how they feel that affected them **long term** (their relationship to that teacher, to other students, the subject and school as a whole).

Section 4

9. As a teacher, what would you do to respond to or prevent situations like the ones you mentioned from occurring?
 - Probe for both **theoretical** and **practical** examples.
 - Probe for examples that specifically address **race**.

Student Sign-Up Sheet
Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators
Rita Kohli, Race and Ethnic Studies in Education

If you identify as being of Woman of Color and are interested in participating in this study, please provide whatever information you feel comfortable including. You are not obligated to participate and your participation (or lack thereof) will not affect your relationship to UCLA or TEP. In addition, this form does not oblige you participate; it is only to demonstrate interest. Once you fill this out, I will be contacting you with a formal letter that you can respond to via email or phone to express your formal interest to participate.

1. Name:

2. Email:

3. Phone Number:

4. Gender:

5. Race/Ethnicity (However you identify):

6. Specialization:
Elementary Secondary/ Subject:

Project Information

Please highlight, bold or underline the answer that best describes your position.

7. How comfortable do you feel having discussions with your peers about race and racism?
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|----------------------|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| not comfortable | | somewhat comfortable | | really comfortable | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

8. How interested are you in having discussions with your peers about race and racism?

not interested somewhat interested very interested

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. How comfortable do you feel having discussions with youth about race and racism?

not interested somewhat interested very interested

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. How interested are you in having discussions with youth about race and racism?

not interested somewhat interested very interested

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. Can you commit to devoting up to ten hours between January- June 2007 to this project:

no probably definitely

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Letter of Invitation
**Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators**

Date

Student's Name

Dear [Student],

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a research study conducted by a Rita Kohli, a former middle school teacher and doctoral candidate in Race and Ethnic Studies at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. You have been sent this letter because you expressed interest in response to a TEP class presentation of the study.

This study will focus on the role of race and racism in the educational experiences and philosophies of pre-service female Teachers of Color.

Students in their first year of UCLA's TEP who identify as a woman and a Student of Color are eligible.

Participating in this study will include several events: 1 hour welcome dinner, 1 hour individual interview, 3 1 hour focus group interviews and 1 hour debrief dinner. Participants will collectively determine the dates and times for these events. At the end of this study, participants are welcome to continue to participate in the data analysis process.

The interview will be digitally recorded, but all interviews will be conducted with the strictest confidentiality and coded for anonymity. Digital recordings from the interviews will be stored securely until transcribed and then destroyed.

I anticipate minimal risk or discomfort to be associated with this part of the study. If you agree to be in this study, you may decline to answer any questions during the interview or withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

You will receive 2 dinners and \$100 worth of social justice curriculum for participation in this study.

Prior to all interviews, I will provide you with time to read and sign a consent form for each component. In brief, the consent forms includes such information as the purpose of the study, procedures, confidentiality issues, participation and withdrawal, rights of research subjects and so forth.

Please note that your decision on whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your relationship with your UCLA or TEP in any way.

If you would like to participate in this study or would like more information about this study, please contact Ms. Rita Kohli at:

Rita Kohli
rkohli@ucla.edu
(917) 806-8901

If necessary, you can also contact Human Subject Review at the Office of Protection of Research Subjects, 2107 Ueberroth Building, UCLA, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694, (310) 825-8714.

Sincerely,

Rita Kohli
Doctoral Candidate
Social Science and Comparative Education
UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom: Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators

You are asked to participate in a research study on the role of race and racism in the educational experiences and philosophies of pre-service female Teachers of Color. Rita Kohli, a doctoral student at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), is conducting this study under the direction of UCLA Professor Daniel Solórzano, Ph.D., Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you identify as a Woman of Color and are first year student enrolled in UCLA's TEP.

- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The intent of this study is to provide an in-depth investigation and analysis on the role of race and racism in the educational experiences and philosophy of pre-service racial minority teachers. This research seeks to understand past educational experiences with racism or cultural bias of pre-service racial minority teachers, current views on race and education of pre-service racial minority teachers and strategies racial minority teachers may have to address race and racism in their future classrooms. It aims to gain this understanding from a multi-racial perspective through individual interviews with participants of varying races and a facilitation of inter-racial dialogue during focus group interviews. Using Critical Race Theory as a foundational framework, this study is meant challenge the dominant framework of teacher education. By illuminating the voices and experiences of pre-service Teachers of Color, this research aims to inform how teacher education can better train teachers to serve the needs of Students of Color.

- **PROCEDURES**

You will be placed in a Group comprised of six students each: 2 Asian American, 2 African American and 2 Latina.

Welcome Dinner

This dinner will be a space for you to get to know those in your group in a relaxed and informal environment. It will also be a time to discuss the goal and format of the research project, as well as to schedule individual interviews.

Individual Interviews with all 12 participants

I will conduct one interview with you. This meeting will involve a short questionnaire, followed by several qualitative prompts (See Individual Interview Protocol). The

prompts will stimulate discussion about 1) who are you; 2) your past experiences with race and/or racism within K-12, and its impact on your perspective; and 3) your current perceptions of race. Excerpts from these interviews will be used as prompts in the focus groups. To ensure that you feel comfortable, I will be gaining permission before using any excerpts.

Focus Group Interview 1, Group A/Group B

Within this focus group, you and your group will be guided in a discussion about where you are from and their experiences with racism within K-12. This will be a forum for participants to get to know each other better, as well as to learn how race and racism played a role in each other's lives. Excerpts from individual interviews will be used as prompts to guide discussion. The session will end with written reflections of the discussion.

Focus Group Interview 2

Within this focus group, you and your group will be guided in a discussion about your current perceptions of race. This will be a forum to push your thinking about race and racism as it pertains to your own racial group, but also other non-White racial groups. Excerpts from individual interviews will be used as prompts to guide discussion. The session will end with written reflections of the discussion.

Focus Group Interview 3, Group A/Group B

Within this focus group, you and your group will be guided in a discussion about the role of race, racism and racial tension in your lives as pre-service teachers. This will be a forum for participants to get comfortable thinking about race and their students, and strategizing how to address racism and racial tension in their classrooms. The prompts to guide this focus group interview will be dependent on the previous discussions, and the dynamic of the group. The group will be asked to come up with something practical, either a lesson plan or a tactic you would like to implement in the classroom. The session will end with written reflections of the discussion.

Closing Dinner, Group A/Group B

This dinner is intended to be an informal space to continue discussion and debrief the research project. You will be given a short questionnaire (See Debrief Questionnaire) and will also receive incentives at this time.

• **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

In reflecting on the role of race and racism in your educational experiences and philosophies, and amongst others, you may become uncomfortable with unhappy experiences or memories recalled. At worst, recalling this information may be

emotionally distressing. However you may elect to not answer any of the questions with which you feel uneasy.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

By reflecting on your educational experiences and current educational philosophies in an inter-racial setting, you potentially will gain inter-racial understanding that can help you as a teacher in multicultural and inter-racial classrooms. In addition, strategizing how to address race and racism is a part of the study. You will leave the study with concrete ideas or lessons to address race and racism in your classroom.

There are also multiple societal benefits in this study. UCLA's TEP will benefit, by having a better understanding of the perspectives and needs of a sample of its Student of Color population. This study can also help teacher education, generally, better understand how to teach Teachers of Color.

- **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will not be paid for participation in this part of the research study; however, you will receive \$100 worth of curriculum related to your subject matter and grade level that you will teach.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your participation in this research is completely confidential. You will be asked for your signature on this consent form [and for acknowledgement of payment.] Your name will not appear anywhere else.

The researcher, Rita Kohli, will be the only individual with access to the data in the study. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you, your schools or universities will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

All interviews will be digitally recorded and coded by a number so that it cannot be identified with you. You have the right to review the recordings of your participation and edit or erase them in whole or in part. The only identifying information on the digital recording will be the code number. Only the researcher will have access to the digital files. These files will be used only for research purposes. The files will be destroyed at the end of this study.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

• **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Rita Kohli
rkohli@ucla.edu
(917) 806-8901.

• **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office for Protection of Research Subjects, 2107 Ueberroth Building, UCLA, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694, (310) 825-8714.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

In my judgment the subject is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Preliminary Questionnaire
Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Race/Ethnicity:

Please circle the answer that best describes you:

5. How much time have you spent around individuals who identify as African American/ Black:

None	Some	A Great Deal
1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8	9 10

6. How much time have you spent around individuals who identify as Asian American/Pacific Islander:

None	Some	A Great Deal
1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8	9 10

7. How much time have you spent around individuals who identify as Latina/o/ Chicana/o, Hispanic:

None	Some	A Great Deal
1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8	9 10

8. How much time have you spent around individuals who identify as White/Caucasian:

None	Some	A Great Deal
1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8	9 10

9. How comfortable are you talking about race/racism with members of your own racial groups?

Not at all	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. How comfortable are you talking about race/racism with members other non-White racial groups?

Not at all Somewhat Comfortable Very Comfortable

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. How comfortable are you talking about race/racism with Whites/Caucasians?

Not at all Somewhat Comfortable Very Comfortable

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. How comfortable do you feel talking about race/racism as a teacher in the classroom of students of the same racial group?

Not at all Somewhat Comfortable Very Comfortable

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

13. How comfortable are you talking about race/racism as a teacher in the classroom of students of other non-White racial groups?

Not at all Somewhat Comfortable Very Comfortable

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14. Below, briefly describe what you hope to gain from participating in this project:

Individual Interview Protocol
Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators

Section 1

Who are you?

1. To the best of your knowledge, describe where your parents grew up.
2. Describe where you grew up.
 - Probe for the **part of the country/world**, suburban, urban, rural.
 - Probe for **race** demographic?
 - Probe for **class** demographic?
3. What made you decide to enter the teaching profession?
 - Probe for why specifically to **UCLA's TEP**.

Section 2

Experiences and Impact of Racism within K-12

4. What is race?
 - Probe for how they **define** it, biological or socially constructed?
5. What racial categories exist in the US?
 - Probe for if the categories are **static** or **fluid**.
6. How do you define racism?
7. Did you witness or personally experience racial/ethnic cultural or linguistic discrimination when you were in middle or high school? Please give me a specific example.
 - Probe for both **macro** and **micro** context.
 - Probe for how they **responded** (or did not respond) immediately.
 - Probe for how they feel that affected them **long term** (their relationship to that teacher, to other students, the subject and school as a whole).
8. Did you witness or personally experience racial/ethnic cultural or linguistic discrimination when you were in elementary school? Please give me a specific example:
 - Probe for both **macro** and **micro** context.
 - Probe for how they **responded** (or did not respond) immediately.

- Probe for how they feel that affected them **long term** (their relationship to that teacher, to other students, the subject and school as a whole).

Section 3

Current Perceptions of Race: Conscious

9. Describe how you see race relations in US society. In Los Angeles. In LAUSD.
 - Probe for if you see any **tension between** racial groups.
 - Probe for if you see any **tension within** racial groups.
 - Probe for if you see any **solidarity between** racial groups.
 - Probe for if you see any **solidarity within** racial groups.
10. Do you feel racism exists in our current society? Why or why not?
 - If so, probe for what racial group(s) are **perpetrators** racism.
 - If so, probe for what racial group(s) are **victims** of racism.
 - If so, probe for why you it might exist?
11. As an adult, have you witnessed or experienced racial discrimination against you or members of your own racial group? Describe an experience.
 - If so, probe for who was the **perpetrator** of this discrimination.
 - If so, probe for what may have instigated this event on a **macro** and **micro** level.
 - Probe for if there was a time where the perpetrator was **non-White**.
12. Have you witnessed racial discrimination of members of your own racial group against another non-White racial group?
 - If so, probe for what racial group(s) were **targets** of this discrimination
 - If so, probe for what may have instigated this event on a **macro** and **micro** level.

Section 4

Current Perceptions of Racism: Unconscious

The purpose of this section of the interview is to better understand your interpretation of stereotypes of different racial groups as they relate to education. I will read a statement and then ask you questions about that statement. Please answer the statement to the best of your ability.

Prompt #1: A statement I have heard is that African American parents do not care about education, what do you think about that? Why might people say that? Do you agree? Have these stereotypes played out in your own lives?

The interview would then continue with follow up sub-prompts, how do you feel the idea of parents not caring about education applies to Latinas/os? Asian Americans? Whites?

Once they have answered Prompt #1, I would then ask about another more positive stereotype.

Prompt #2: A statement I have heard is that Asian Americans are really good students, what do you think about that? Why might people say that? Do you agree? Have these stereotypes played out in your own lives?

The interview would then continue with follow up sub-prompts, how do you feel the notion of being really good students applies to Latinas/os? African Americans? Whites?

Focus Group 1 Protocol
Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators

This focus group is meant to be a space for you to get to know each other, your backgrounds and experiences, as well as your understanding of race and racism and how it plays out in schools. The topics discussed during this session are of a very personal nature, and it is important to maintain a level of respect and sensitivity at all times. Everyone in the group has a valuable perspective, and we must remember that this is a space to learn from one another. It is also important that we view this group as a learning community, and remind ourselves to monitor our participation and step up and step back when necessary.

1. My personal experience with racial discrimination when I was young:
 - a. What experiences did you have with discrimination in school during your K-12 education?
2. My personal experience with internalized racism:
 - a. How did your experiences with discrimination impact your self or worldview, and/or your ethnic identity?
3. A lot of you mentioned that you wanted to hear how others defined race and racism. So, let's discuss this, what is race?
4. What is racism?
5. Do you see race and racism playing out in school that you currently work in? Does it manifest in similar or different ways from your childhood experiences?

Group discussions do not always allow for you to express all your thoughts and feelings, especially when discussing amongst people you are just getting to know. In order to better capture your thoughts and feelings about the discussion that just took place, please take the next 10-15 minutes to free write a reflection about the last two hours.

Focus Group 2 Protocol
Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators

This focus group is meant to be a space for you to get dig deeper about the racial tensions that you see in society and in schools. The topics discussed during this session are of a very personal nature, and it is important to maintain a level of respect and sensitivity at all times. Everyone in the group has a valuable perspective, and we must remember that this is a space to learn from one another. It is also important that we view this group as a learning community, and remind ourselves to monitor our participation and step up and step back when necessary.

1. As an adult, have you witnessed or experienced racial discrimination against you or members of your own racial group?
 - a. Can you describe an experience where the perpetrator was not White?
2. Have you witnessed racial discrimination of members of your own racial group against another non-White racial group?
3. Do you see similar tensions, tensions between People of Color, playing out in school or in the classroom?
 - a. Why do you think these things happen?
 - b. What can we do/ have you seen people do to resolve this issue?
4. I asked you questions about common sentiments around Black, Latina/o, Asian American and White parents and students and education, why do you think it is that we hear comments about Black and Latina/o failure and/or apathy, Asian American success and/or determination, and not much about Whites?
 - a. You mentioned that these ideas contribute to tension between Communities of Color, how so? What can we do to counter these things in the classroom?

Group discussions do not always allow for you to express all your thoughts and feelings, especially when discussing amongst people you are just getting to know. In order to better capture your thoughts and feelings about the discussion that just took place, please take the next 10-15 minutes to free write a reflection about the last two hours.

Focus Group 3 Protocol
Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators

This focus group interview attempts to facilitate a strategizing session to address race and racism in the classroom. Just to remind you, you may withdraw from this study at any time without consequences of any kind. Also, you are not obligated to answer all questions. You may refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study.

1. Where do you think you might be confronted with racism or racial tension in the classroom?
2. What can we do to address this?

*Excerpts from individual interviews will supplement focus group interviews.

Debrief Questionnaire
Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom:
Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Race/Ethnicity:

Please circle the answer that best describes you:

5. How comfortable are you talking about race/racism with members of your own racial groups?
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|---|----|--|
| Not at all | Somewhat Comfortable | | | | | | Very Comfortable | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |

6. How comfortable are you talking about race/racism with members other non-White racial groups?
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|---|----|--|
| Not at all | Somewhat Comfortable | | | | | | Very Comfortable | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |

7. How comfortable are you talking about race/racism as a teacher in the classroom of students of the same racial group?
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|---|----|--|
| Not at all | Somewhat Comfortable | | | | | | Very Comfortable | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |

8. How comfortable do you feel talking about race/racism as a teacher in the classroom of students of other non-White racial groups?
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|---|----|--|
| Not at all | Somewhat Comfortable | | | | | | Very Comfortable | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |

9. How comfortable are you talking about race/racism as a teacher in the classroom of students of other non-White racial groups?

Not at all Somewhat Comfortable Very Comfortable
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. How useful was participating in this project to you?

Not useful Somewhat Useful Very Useful
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. Below, briefly describe what you feel you gained from participating in this project. Did it live up to your expectations?

12. What do you like about the project?

13. What do you dislike about the project?

14. What would you add to the project?

15. What would you change in the project?

16. Would you like to continue meeting with your group? Why/Why not?

17. Are you willing to participate in one more focus group interview with the women from both focus groups?

Yes

No

18. Any additional comments

Lesson Plan 1

Lesson designed for: 6th grade English

Overview: Some of the members of the focus group did not see a mere class lesson on different cultures and racism as a very effective method of addressing the issue of overcoming racism and discrimination. We noticed that it took actual friendships and a feeling of community in order for people to see past racial stereotypes and discard previous generalizations of a group of people. Taking this into consideration, we wanted to take steps to create a relational culture in the classroom that would encourage friendships among classmates. We wanted to incorporate a personal aspect to the lesson and make an impact for the students that will go beyond the current year and classroom.

Objective: For students to become aware of each other's daily lives in order to build a stronger classroom community and awareness and acceptance of different cultural backgrounds and personal life experiences through constant communication outside of the classroom.

State Standards:
English / Language Arts

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions: Students write and speak with a command of Standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

Sentence Structure

1.1 Use simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences; use effective coordination and subordination of ideas to express complete thoughts. *Grammar*

1.2 Identify and properly use indefinite pronouns and present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect verb tenses; ensure that verbs agree with compound subjects.

Punctuation

1.3 Use colons after the salutation in business letters, semicolons to connect independent clauses, and commas when linking two clauses with a conjunction in compound sentences.

Capitalization

1.4 Use correct capitalization.

Spelling

1.5 Spell frequently misspelled words correctly (e.g., *their, they're, there*).

Visual Arts

2.0 Creative Expression

Communication and Expression Through Original Works of Art

2.5 Select specific media and processes to express moods, feelings, themes, or ideas.

2.6 Use technology to create original works of art.

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Connections and Applications

5.3 Create artwork containing visual metaphors that express the traditions and myths of selected cultures.

Lesson Outline:

1. Students will begin the year (first day of school) by establishing classroom norms: respect, rules, etc.
 - a. Students will establish the meaning of respect and how this looks within a classroom. For example, not speaking when someone else is speaking, offering help when someone else may need it, etc.
2. Teacher will explain to students that they will be doing an ongoing activity that will last about the entire year.
3. Teacher will introduce to students their notebooks that they are to keep for the year.
 - a. Students will then be allowed to decorate the cover of their journal. Teacher will provide students with magazines, crayons, colored pencils, construction paper, etc. Students are to decorate their notebooks with things that identify them/they identify with (i.e. drawing of a family, favorite color, favorite animal, food, etc.) Before students break up to do this, teacher will facilitate a discussion on what “identity” means to students. Some guiding questions may include:
 - Who are you?
 - What is important to you?
 - What are your local, national, cultural, and global identities?
 - How does gender, race, class, or sexual orientation play a role in your identity?
 - (This question may make students feel uncomfortable, but it also gives them the opportunity to think about how important these aspects are to their identity. Teacher will let students know that these questions can be for their own personal reflections; students have the choice in what they want to reveal. This is especially important in the beginning of the year when there is not yet a classroom community.)

- b. After students are finished they will be asked to get in pairs and talk about their notebook cover with their partner. After they are done students will sit next to their partner in a circle. Teacher will go around to each partner group and ask students to talk about their partner's cover (what they learned).
- c. Students will then be asked to find a spot in the class where they can sit and write about the following prompt (this will be their second entry in their journal): **Today I learned a little about _____ . I learned _____ . (Three things you learned about your partner)**
Teacher will then explain to students that the person they partnered with will be their partner for the next 2 weeks, and that the purpose of this is to build a classroom community. Teacher will then ask students will also discuss their ideas on what "community" means to them. Some guiding questions may include:
- What groups do I belong to?
 - What is a community?
 - How could we create a community within the classroom (team name, team building activities, team motto, comfortable environment, etc)
- d. Teacher will inform students that for the rest of the year they will be meeting with a new person every two weeks. Each week students will have certain activities they are to carry out with their partner. They will also be informed that they will be getting a letter sent home to parents letting them know what they will be doing in class, just so that parents are aware of their ongoing yearly project.
- e. Students will be told that during each new rotation they are to inquire about their partner through using the following (but are not limited to): hanging out at lunch, nutrition, hanging out over the weekend, working on homework together at each other's house, etc. Students should record observations and insights throughout these activities in their journals. Students may also (and are encouraged to) include drawings and/or picture that they may have taken with their partners. Students are encouraged to write down questions they may think of during the activities. Then partners can obtain answers from each other by referring to those questions in the journals. This will also serve as practice for interviewing people.
- f. Each week students will be given a list of the things they are to learn about each other, but of course are encouraged to get to know them as much as possible, and also to get to know the rest of their classmates as well, but their work will pertain to the person they are working with for the two weeks. However, if they come across new findings that they have learned

about other classmate they are encouraged to write it down in their journal as well as this will build their understanding of their classmates.

4. At the end of the year when students have all met with one another, they will be given the last month (3 weeks) of school to put together the final culminating project. Students will be asked to form committees so as to ensure that each student is taking part in the final project, as it is a representation of their community.
 - a. Students will take all the information they have learned about one another and put it all together. Each student will write a paragraph about themselves (anthology) and quotes that they feel represent the people they met with and it will all be put together into a book as well as well as making an i-movie video where students will be able to speak about themselves (anthology) and then afterwards there can be a song that they chose which they think represents them as background music, while quotes and pictures that their peers have chosen are being displayed.
 - i. Students will work on this as a collaborative within the last few weeks of school and will be able to display what they have made and learned with their families. They will be asked to bring food (potluck style) that represents their culture and the video will be displayed during this time in order to demonstrate and honor their hard work and dedication as well as to share with one another a bit of their background.

Lesson Plan 2
Building Bridges of Cultural Understanding:
Understanding Personal Backgrounds and Exploring Shared Experiences

Lesson designed for: 9th grade English

Objective: To build community in the classroom through an understanding of personal backgrounds and exploration of shared experiences

State Standards: Writing 2.1 a-e & Speaking App. 2.3 a-b

Guiding Questions: Can students randomly grouped in a given class search for a find similarities amongst themselves? Will discovering shared experiences help develop community in the classroom?

Methods: Students will write individual “about me” poems and then, in groups of 4 or 5, write an “about us” poem.

“I am from”/“We are” Poetry

Day 1

- Read poem “I Am From Swing Sets and Jungle Gyms” by Debby Gordon (see attached page for poem)
- Discuss the use of ‘I am from’ as a repeating line that moves the poem
- Have students take out a piece of paper as the class goes through the poem line by line and identifies the types of things the poet names (foods, things around the house, things around the neighborhood, family and friends, popular sayings/advice, and things in the backyard.) Note that last line talks about the present.
- Students brainstorm lists that would parallel the types of things mentioned. Encourage them to make it homely- use home language, real names, imagery.
- Have students share their brainstorms in their groups and work on being more specific (ex- not ‘tree’ but ‘elm,’ not ‘gold fingernails’ but ‘long, sun kissed gold fingernails, not ‘lasagna’ but ‘Aunt Bessie’s three cheese lasagna.’)
- Students begin to write their poems. Encourage them to find a phrase like “I Am From” to link their poem. Maybe, “I Am” or “In my blood is” or “My history is.” Also, remind students that the ending part has to be about the present.
- Students finish poems for homework

Day 2

- Students share poems with the entire class
- Students listen to others’ poems and provide feedback on what is good about the poem
- Subsequent drafts may be assigned if student poems missed the target.

Day 3

- In groups, have students work on writing a “We are” poem.
- Students collaborate in their groups of four or five to find similarities in their backgrounds and current lives. Encourage them to focus on the ties and similarities that bond them across gender and race lines. Possible leads include...
 - -Similar neighborhood features
 - -Similar school settings and experiences
 - -Similar family rituals (ex- eating together, going to church, playing games)
 - -Types of foods they enjoy
 - -Treatment as minorities in America, common ancestor nations
 - -TV shows and radio stations
 - -Words they live by (ex-“you must go to college” “say no to drugs”)
 - -Hang outs, groups of friends, extracurricular activities, habits
 - -Feelings toward school, family, friends, homework, etc.
 - -Childhood memories (annual Christmas photo, fights with siblings)
- Poem Requirements:
 - Imagery and at least 2 other literary devices
 - At least 5 stanzas
 - Must describe similarities that at least 75% of group share
 - Must describe some things from past and some from present
 - Entire group must give input
- When finished, groups will share poems with entire class

Race, Racism and K-12 Education

Education 406

Fall 2007, Thursday 1-4pm, Moore Hall 2120

Instructor: Rita Kohli

Email: rkohli@ucla.edu

Seminar Description:

This class introduces students to a multicultural perspective about race, racism and its impact on the US K-12 education system. It situates today's educational inequity in a historical perspective, while encouraging a connection between theory and practice, as well as personal experience and classroom teaching. Readings and discussions will allow students to 1) explore pre-desegregation conditions for Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Latina/o and indigenous students, 2) understand the historical context of desegregation, and 3) learn of the continued manner in which racism manifests in schools today. Students should leave the course with a stronger understanding of the social and historical foundations of US education, as well as how to apply these lenses to their own pedagogy.

Objectives:

By the end of the class, it is an objective that:

1. Students will have an understanding of race, racism, and other forms of subordination as they relate to education.
2. Students will begin to see parallels and differences in the educational histories and experiences of different racial groups and communities.
3. Students will have a more multicultural understanding of current educational inequity.
4. Students will be able to place current educational issues within a historical context.
5. Students will have a better analysis of their own educational experiences and teaching, as it relates to theories of educational inequity.

Required Texts:

Course Reader

Course Assignments and Projects:

Weekly Reading Reflections

You will be required to turn in a 1-2 page reading reflection each week that begins to connect personal experience to the theory and themes of each week. Hard copies of the reflection will be due in class, and no late papers will be accepted.

Group Presentation

In groups of 3-4, you will be asked sign up for one group presentation throughout the duration of the class. This presentation should include an activity that addresses the themes of the readings, followed by the facilitation of a class discussion around the topics of the week. The entire presentation should take approximately 30-45 minutes.

Identity Paper

You will be required to turn in a 3-4 page paper about identity. In the paper, you will explore the role of race, class and gender, and whatever other factors are salient to you in your life. You should also describe how you feel aspects of your identity will connect/separate you from the experiences of your students.

Educational Experience Paper

You will be required to turn in a 5-6 page paper about your educational experiences. In the paper, you will explore how factors of your identity (examined in the *Identity paper*) have worked to privilege or disadvantage you within your educational experiences. You will also examine how your educational experiences will connect/separate you from the experiences of your students.

Research Paper

You will be required to turn in a 7-8 page research paper about a current issue of educational inequality. The aim of this paper is to better inform you about a structural issue that you may be confronted with in your own teaching (i.e. tracking, bilingual education, resource inequity), and possibly give you a literature review that you can use in your inquiry project resident year. The research will be a combination of library sources, interviews, and lesson plans.

Grading Breakdown:

Class Participation	10%
Group Presentation	10%
Reading Reflections	20%
Identity Paper	10%
Education Experience Paper	20%
Research Paper	30%
TOTAL	100%

Week 1: Introduction to Race, Racism and Education, 10/4

Week 2: Race, Racism and the Functions of Schooling, 10/11

Reading Reflection Due

Readings

- Sue, D. (2003). "What is Racism?" *Overcoming Our Racism: The Journey to Liberation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 23-44.
- Irons, P. (2002). "Cut Yer Thumb er Finger Off." *Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., p. 1-23.
- Wollenberg, C. (1995). "'Yellow Peril' in the Schools (1)." In (Eds. Nakanishi, D. & Nishida), T. *The Asian American Educational Experience*. New York: Routledge, p. 3-12.
- Zitala-si/ Bonnin, G. (1921). *American Indian Stories*. Washington: Hayworth Publishing House, p. 47-49.

Week 3: Fighting for Educational Equity, 10/18

Identity Paper Due

Readings

- Beals, M.P. (1994). Chapter 7, *Warriors Don't Cry: Searing Memoir of Battle to Integrate Little Rock*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Ferg-Cadima, J. (May 2004) "Black, White and Brown: Latino School Desegregation Efforts in the Pre- and Post- Brown v. Board of Education Era." *Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund*, p.5-34.
(Download)
<http://www.maldef.org/publications/pdf/LatinoDesegregationPaper2004.pdf>
- Oakes, J., Rogers, J., Silver, D. (2004). Separate and Unequal 50 Years After *Brown*: California's Racial "Opportunity Gap". Report published by UCLA/IDEA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access, p.1-18.
(Download)
<http://www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications/idea/images/brownsu2.pdf>

In Class Video

Beyond Brown (1 hour)

Week 4: The Invisibility of White Privilege in Schooling, 10/25

Reading Reflection Due

Readings

- MacIntosh, P. (1990). "Unpacking the Knapsack of White Privilege." *Independent School*. 49(2): 31-36.
- Perez Huber, L., Johnson, R.N., Kohli, R. (2006). "Naming Racism: A Conceptual Look at Internalized Racism and US Schools." *Chicana/o Latina/o Law Review*, v. 26, p.183-206
- Kohli, R. (in press). "Interrupting Racism in Schools: Critical Race Reflections of Future Teachers of Color." *Teacher Education Quarterly*. p. 1-11.

Loewen, J. (1996). "Gone With the Wind: The Invisibility of Racism in American History Textbooks." *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. New York: The New Press, p.138-170.

Suggested Additional Readings:

Woodson, C. (1933). *MisEducation of the Negro*, Trenton: Africa World Press.
bell hooks (2001). *Salvation: Black People and Love*. New York: Harper Collins Press.

In Class Video

Class Dismissed (20 min)
A Girl Like Me (8 minutes)

Guest Speaker

Danny Solórzano, UCLA Professor- Critical Race Theory

Week 5: Culture and Language Debates, 11/1

Reading Reflection Due

Readings

- "Standard American English." *The Rise of a Standard Language*. P.96-103.
"Gullah and Black English Vernacular." *American Languages in Contact*. 206-214.
Delpit, L. (Fall 1997). Ebonics and Culturally Responsive Instruction. *Rethinking Schools*. 12(1)
Rumberger, R., & Gándara, P. (2004). "Seeking Equity in the Education of California's English Learners." *Teachers College Record*, 106 (10), 2032-2056.
Pang, V., Kian, P. & Pak, Y. (2004). "Asian Pacific American Students: Challenging a Biased Educational System." p.542-563.

Suggested Additional Readings:

- Ling-Chi Wang, L. (1995). "Lau v. Nichols. History of a Struggle for Equal and Quality Education." In (Eds. Nakanishi, D. & Nishida), T. *The Asian American Educational Experience*. New York: Routledge, p. 58-82.
Lee, S. (1996). "Listening to Asian American Youth." *Unraveling the Model Minority" Stereotype*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Introduce Model Minority Myth

Week 6: Testing, 11/08

Educational Experience Paper Due

Readings

- Stoskopf, A. (Spring 1999). "The Forgotten History of Eugenics. *Rethinking Schools*, 13(3).
- Hilliard, A. (Summer 1998). Standards: Decoy or Quality Control, *Rethinking Schools*, 12(4).
- Hout, et. al (1997) "Race, Ethnicity and Intelligence." *Inequality By Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- "First Things First: □ Why we must stop punishing students and fix California's schools." (2003) Report Published by Californians for Justice Education Fund. **(Download)**
- http://caljustice.org/cfj_live/images/stories/2003_First_Things_First.pdf

Suggested Additional Readings:

- Steele, C. (1997) "A Threat in the Air: How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance." *American Psychologist*. 52(6): 613:629.

Week 7: Stratification and Inequity, 11/15

Reading Reflection Due

Paper Topic Due

Readings

- Rist, R. (1973) "Kindergarten: Beginning of the Journey." *The Urban School: A Factory for Failure*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p.64-99.
- Oakes, J. (2002). "Keeping Track, Part 1: The Policy and Practice of Curriculum Inequality." *Equity Materials*.
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). "Seguín High School in Historical Perspective: Mexican Americans' Struggle for Equal Educational Opportunity in Houston." *Subtractive Schooling*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p.3-32.

Social Reproduction Theory

In Class Video

School Colors (45 minute excerpt)

Week 8: Thanksgiving, 11/22

No Class

Week 9: Looking towards Change: Resistance and Reform, 11/29

Reading Reflections Due

Outline and Three Sources Due

Readings

- Larson, C. and Ovando, C. (2001). *The Color of Bureaucracy*. Belmont: Wadsworth, p.36-59.
- Solórzano, D. & Delgado-Bernal, D. (2001). "Examining Transformational Resistance Through a Critical Race and LatCrit Theory Framework: Chicana and Chicano Students in an Urban Context." *Urban Education*, 36: 308-342.
- Freire, P. (1998). "Fourth Letter." *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Guest Speaker: Noma LeMoine, LAUSD- Culturally Relevant Education

Week 10: Student Presentations, 12/06

Short Presentation of Research Paper

Research Paper: Due Monday, 12/10

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- bell hooks (2001). *Salvation: Black People and Love*, New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Child Development Project. (1998). *Ways We Want Our Class to Be: Class Meetings That Build Commitment to Kindness and Learning*. Oakland, CA: Developmental Studies Center.
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- Clark, E.R. & Flores, B.B. (2001). "Who am I? The Social Construction of Ethnic Identity and Self-Perceptions in Latino Pre-service Teachers." *The Urban Review*, 33(1): 69-86.
- Cokely, K. (2002). "Testing Cross's Revised Racial Identity Model: An Examination of the Relationship Between Racial Identity and Internalized Racism." *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 49(4): 476-483.
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- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other People's Children*, New York, NY: The New Press.
- DiMassa, C. (April 20, 2005). "Dozens of Police Officers Patrol Jefferson High After Race Brawl." www.latimes.com
- Fanon, F. (1963). *Wretched of the Earth*, New York, NY: Grove Press.
- Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1998). "Fourth Letter." *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach*. Boulder: Westview Press.

- Gay, G. & Howard, T.C. (2000). "Multicultural Teacher Education for the 21st Century." *Teacher Educator*, 36(1): 1-16.
- Haley, A & Malcolm X (1964). *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Howard, T.C. (2003). "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher Reflection." *Theory Into Practice*. 42(3): 195-202.
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- Johnson, R. (2008). Internalized Racism and California US History State Standards: Racism, Curriculum, and African American Identity. Unpublished Manuscript. University of California, Los Angeles (*manuscript under review*).
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